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ABSTRACT

This document consists of 11 monthly newsletter issues, in English and Spanish language versions, exploring topics related to early childhood behavior and parenting. Regularly appearing features are "Library Resources," "Preschoolers in the Kitchen," "Websites for Parents," and "The Doctor's Corner." Major topics of the newsletter issues are as follows: (1) infant temperament (January); (2) physical fitness for preschoolers (February); (3) emergent literacy (March); (4) children's dreams (April); (5) science activities (May); (6) family rituals and traditions (June); (7) children's play (July-August); (8) sexuality and sex education (September); (9) attention deficit disorders (October); (10) early reading and pre-reading skills (November); and (11) parental adjustment (December). (KB)

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Parent and Preschooler Newsletter: A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics, 2000.

Volume 15, Numbers 1-11.

Sandra Wolkoff, Ed.
Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ed.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 Parents' Choice Approval Award

Volume 15, Number 1 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | January - 2000

Kids Do Come With an Instruction Book

How to "Read" Your Baby

Sharon was moving her family, including her nine week old daughter, three thousand miles, but her fussy baby cried and cried, creating a cycle of nursing that seemed to go on for 24 hours a day. A baby carrier that had worked so well for her older brother, only brought screams from her. Until, that is, her mother, desperate to get chores done, flipped her baby around so that she faced the excitement of the world, and could see all the colors, smiles, and action going on.

Sharon kept on paying attention to her baby until she could make sense of what her daughter was trying to say and find a solution to the problem.

Jessie came out sucking on her hand with her mother swearing that her daughter had not taken her fingers out of her mouth even during the delivery. Even though she found her thumb quickly, her newborn fussiness didn't get better until her mother realized that Jessie was happiest on her back, in her crib, with a music box working overtime.

As a second child, Jessie sometimes got lost in the confusion and noise in the house, but her mother quickly learned how to comfort her baby when she needed it. She also discovered that Jessie never seemed to like change and preferred environments that were familiar.

How did these mothers get to know their babies so quickly? How were they able to figure out the tricks to comfort and soothe their newborns within days of their arrival? The answer lies in both the ability of a baby to communicate his or her needs effectively, and in a parent's capacity to hear, interpret, and successfully respond to those needs.

Parents have lamented for years that babies, unlike cars and major appliances, don't come with manuals and instruction books, often leaving parents nervous and bewildered about how to care for these complicated little creatures. But even with hundreds of parenting books on the shelves of libraries and book stores, quick fixes and general formulas don't always work.

While each child is unique in behavior and responses, parents can master some tips to decipher their children's code, learning to "read" their children, and make sense of their behavior. The good news is that babies are willing to help us. Through their cries of discomfort and pain, and smiles of satisfaction and pleasure, babies provide the instant feedback that enables parents to learn how to take care of them.

Sounding an Alarm

Even a small seven pound baby can release a piercing wail that causes every adult within 20 feet to jump in response. Our babies cry for a reason. They need something and they need a grown-up to provide it. Most parents, after only several weeks with their newborn, can distinguish

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between a sudden scream of intense pain, one of cranky overload, or the familiar cry caused by the discomfort of hunger. Babies need to sound these alarms in order to make sure grown-ups are taking care of them, so they will persist until the caregiver gets it right. The loud suckling of a feeding baby lets a parent know right away that hunger was fueling the cries. The persistent distress of a fed, clean baby makes us worry that they are ill or in pain. The parent may look for a finger caught on something, or an angry diaper rash to explain the distress. The predictable fussiness just before sleep time may make a parent nervous at first, but the baby, by falling asleep, shows us that this is part of a normal routine. We listen to the sounds from the crib, but the baby has taught us not to worry

Temperamental Clues

Researchers have believed for years that babies have an inborn style that describes the way they approach new situations and tasks. This style, or temperament, gives parents insight into how their children naturally solve problems, and react to the events around them. A slow cautious baby may look at toys and quietly place them down. A difficult, more irritable, baby may just throw the toys around, not realizing there is pleasure in looking at, and touching, the toy. The child whose habits are regular and predictable seems easier to toilet train and may sleep through the night easily; the child who is extremely sensitive to changes in his environment may have a harder time at the child care center, or being dragged along on errands and carpools.

Understanding a child's temperament can often help a parent successfully manage and anticipate a child's behavior. Knowing how a child responds to events in his environment can help a parent feel in control of the environment and in control of their child's behavior. Reading our children correctly can help us anticipate how they will react to situations and help everyone prepare and plan good solutions and strategies.

Sneak a Peak

While many of us spend hours and hours with our children, it is rare that we actually are able to observe them in action. There are moments when we see them in the playground or watch them with their classmates and we can be startled by what we see. How did they get so grown up? Why is she the only one sitting by herself? How can he say he doesn't have friends when all the kids are standing near him? It is in these spontaneous and somewhat secret observations that we learn much about our children. Witnessing these snapshots of their behavior helps us get much smarter about their functioning and development.

Eavesdropping on the singing of the toddler as she falls asleep teaches us how many words she really knows. Overhearing our pre-schooler having a pretend fight with his action figures sounds eerily like the fight at dinner last night and gives us remarkable clues to how our young child understood what happened. Hearing our five-year-old tell his baby sister that it is good to share tells us just how much our children are learning about the rules of the family. Sneaking a peak lets us look and learn about how our children are doing.

Birthday parties and play dates offer wonderful opportunities to see our children interacting with other children, showing us sides of their personality we don't get so see at the kitchen table. Watching our children speak to the pediatrician, struggling to find words for their feelings, making eye contact, engaging in conversation, lets us see our kids the way other grown-ups do. We also can see, in their play and fantasy, a mirror of our

A Book About (Your Child's Name): Creating Your Own Manual

Writing a manual about youngsters turns parents into keen observers...and it's also fun. Here are some questions to get you started. If you want to be formal about it, use each question as the heading and write down the answers. Otherwise, you can just think about the answers. Of course, you can develop your own special questions that capture your child's unique nature.

- ✦ How does your baby or young child let you know when she enjoys an activity?
- ✦ How does your baby or young child let you know when she's had enough?
- ✦ When does your child get cranky? When he's hungry? Tired? Bored? Is there a particular time of day?
- ✦ What works to distract your youngster?
- ✦ Is your baby easily soothed? What works to calm him down? Does he like to be held and cuddled or is gentle bouncing a better choice?
- ✦ Does your child wake up happy or grumpy?
- ✦ What happens when your youngster has to change from one activity to another? Does she get flustered and resistant? Go happily from one thing to the next?
- ✦ What does your child like to do the most? What other activities does he enjoy?
- ✦ What does your child like to do the least?
- ✦ How is your child with other children? Is she eager to play or does she prefer to be alone or with you? Does she have a few favorite playmates? Or is she happy to be with almost anyone?
- ✦ Is your youngster active? Quiet?
- ✦ What does your child do at the park or playground? Run ahead and climb the equipment? Head for quiet play in the sandbox? Stay close to you until he feels comfortable?
- ✦ If your child is older, you may want to enlist her help in answering some of these questions. Just for fun, you may even want to answer these questions for your own behavior.

own success in parenting.

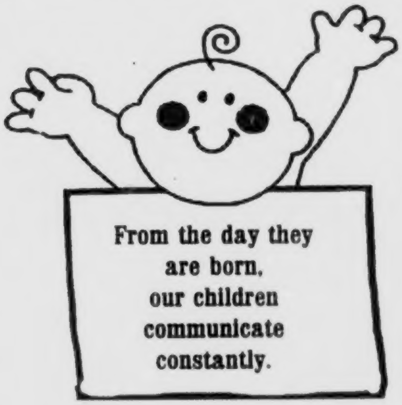
Alan is a devoted father by anyone's definition. He loves the rough and tumble play with his two sons but he is also a disciplinarian. Alan parents the way his own dad did - lots of rules and consequences. But nevertheless, it was quite a shock to overhear his seven-year-old scream at his younger brother, "You are bad, bad, bad! Don't you know how to listen?" Alan understood that he was watching a sibling rivalry issue being played out, but he worried that his big boy might hear the discipline in the house as excessively harsh and punitive. Alan was concerned that maybe his seven-year-old felt as if he were a "bad, bad boy" incapable of following all the rules in the house. Alan used this sneak peak at the drama between his sons to measure how effective his parenting skills were. He began to think that perhaps there was a gap between his intent, which was to be a strong consistent parent, and his behavior, which might be seen by a little boy as harsh and judgmental.

While the results are not always pleasant, the feedback and information we receive when we view and observe our children can be extremely helpful. The snapshots of their functioning can help us measure own effectiveness with the children as well, creating an opportunity to change, or continue, in our parenting behavior.

What Gets in the Way

Sometimes children are not good communicators. Some are so irritable and uncomfortable that they seem to cry all the time. Or they become quickly overwhelmed in their environments and tantrums are the norm, not the exception. Sometimes parents are not such good listeners, not paying attention to their parenting successes with their children and unable to use them as a guide for future behaviors. And sometimes adults are so exhausted by work and family pressure, that they barely have enough time and energy to pay the kind of attention little children need.

Children with developmental delays or chronic health issues may have trouble distinguishing within themselves what is going on, and can only let the world and their parents know that something is not right. Pre-schoolers with motor or language delays may seem difficult because they cannot coach the adults around them to recognize their needs. Their helplessness and difficulty in expressing themselves can confuse and frustrate the adults around them as well.



The Child as Teacher

So, it seems, that while we are the adults, it is often our children who are the teachers. From the day they are born, our children communicate constantly-although not always well. Our job is to pay attention and hear what our children are trying to tell us, as frustrating and exhausting as that may seem. In their behavior is the instruction manual for taking care of them. We are all aware of the parenting rule that expects the adults to be in control of their children. In reality, it is when we listen to our children carefully, that we can guide and shape their behavior most effectively. In deciphering the clues in our children's communication, we write the manual that tells us how our children work.

Temperamental Styles

Temperamental styles fall into three categories: easy, slow to warm up and difficult. While most parents swear that their children are difficult, according to the initial temperament studies, most babies, about 60%, fall into the easy category. Easy babies are not babies who never cry or get into trouble-they are just appropriate in their responses to the events around them. Even easy babies can be colicky, but when that passes, their more adaptable style emerges. Easy babies may cry when mommy leaves them with a babysitter, but they will adjust in an appropriate time and manner to the new surroundings.

A slow to warm up child may be clingy and weepy, not just the first day of nursery school, but for weeks afterward. A teacher's sudden illness and absence may set them back. A move to a new home creates worries that don't fade quickly, even when parents work hard to decorate a room with all the most favorite things.

Difficult children are not bad children, but they tend to be excessive. They cry loud and hard, they may be seem fussy and inflexible and have exaggerated responses to many events.

Chris is the youngest of three children and all through the pregnancy his mother kept saying, "He's not like the others." A few weeks into his infancy, it became clear that Chris was a bit fussier and more irritable, requiring more patience and work than his siblings. By the time he was a pre-schooler, Chris had established himself as a loving child, and one who is also a picky eater, fussy about dressing, easily overloaded by smells, sounds, and activity, and very particular and inflexible about his needs. His mother, now a seasoned parent, read his signals correctly. While under her breath she muttered about how stubborn he was, she also learned that birthday parties were not really fun for him. School tired him since he was not always flexible enough to move along with the group activity, and play dates needed to be scheduled for when he was well rested and well fed. Chris' temperament, while having elements of that of a difficult child, was fortunately clear enough for his family to read. Having successfully raised two other children, his parents were not as afraid of failing to manage him and attempted to match his environment to his temperament. While it was not always possible to arrange a schedule to meet Chris' needs, his parents could at least anticipate them and reduce the likelihood of his having a difficult time. Chris came with his own unique instruction booklet and by reading it correctly, his parents were able to manage his behavior and still create a loving and supportive environment.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW is the Director of the Right from the Start 0-3⁺ Center of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. A freelance writer, consultant, and trainer, Ms. Wolkoff frequently appears on television and radio.

Special Books for Parents and Professionals

🕮 ***Family Wisdom*** by Susan Ginsberg, Ed.D; Columbia University Press; New York, 1996; Hardcover. The subtitle of this book tells it all "The 2,000 most important things ever said about parenting, children, and family life." The book is a collection of wisdom gleaned from writings and proverbs covering a bit of everything. It provides much to think about.

🕮 ***Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*** by Betty Hart, Ph.D. and Todd R. Risley, Ph.D.; Paul Brookes Publishing Co.; Baltimore, MD, 1995; Hardcover, $22.00. It isn't often that the public experiences (vicariously) the joys and frustrations of conducting a major research project, making this more a book for professionals than for parents. But the findings the authors report are fascinating and important for everyone. Basically, differences in the way parents talk to their one- and two-year-old children translate into differences in the children's vocabulary and language. Ultimately, it will affect their school success.

🕮 ***The Scientist in the Crib*** by Alison Gopnik, Ph.D., Andrew Meltzoff, Ph.D., and Patricia Kuhl, Ph.D., William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1999; Hardcover, $24.00. Understanding children's development in the first few years of life has become a very hot topic with no shortage of books available. This book is written by researchers in a warm, friendly style which makes it a pleasure to read. Perfect for those who want to understand children's thinking and cognitive development. Chapters focus on how children learn about people, things and language.

🕮 ***What's Going on in There?*** by Lise Eliot, Ph.D. Bantam Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $26.95. Although not quite as "reader friendly," this book is very informative. Eliot is a neurobiologist and she focuses on the neurological underpinnings of the brain and how the environment changes, enhances, or compromises its development. Chapters include the basic biology of brain development, the importance of touch, the early world of smell, as well as memory and language and intelligence.

Dear Reader

I don't know if scientists have determined how much of our communication is done through words alone, but I'm certain that tone, pitch, and gestures are crucial in conveying meaning and nuance. For young children, these may well be their primary means of communication. This month Sandra Wolkoff, CSW has written our feature on observing children and how we can learn to understand their messages. Before we can respond to our youngsters effectively we need to understand their nonverbal "language."

We don't like to think about the hazards lurking around the house. Homes are supposed to be havens, places of safety, but it's too easy (and too common) for there to be dangerous substances which can inadvertently hurt children. This month Rose Ann Soloway of the American Association of Poison Control Centers provides us with ways to keep our children safe, and what to do in case of possible poisoning.

Do you want to learn more about babies and how they grow? This month's Library Resources includes reviews of books about the joys and challenges of families. "Special books for Parents and Professionals" reviews some of the new books describing the workings of the minds of our children.

This is also our first issue in the year 2000. Somehow it feels like the right time to make a fresh start. What is it you'd like to do? Or, not do? Are there changes and improvements you want to make in your life? I don't know what the future holds, but perhaps we can decide what we would like and work to make it happen.

To a wonderful year! Neala Schwartzberg

THE HEALTH CORNER

Poison Prevention

Every year, the exploits of curious youngsters prompt more than one million emergency calls to U.S. poison centers. While most of these children do fine, tragedies occur. Some children are permanently scarred after swallowing a caustic chemical. An overdose of iron can cause a painful death. A single adult dose of some medicines means an automatic stay in the intensive care unit. How can you avoid such a catastrophe?

It is normal for children to crawl, climb, reach, imitate adults, and put things into their mouths. These ways of learning about the world are precisely the behaviors that cause poison exposures IF adults leave dangerous items within reach. While it's not possible to lock up everything at home, it is possible to identify the most dangerous poisons for children. If children can't see, reach, or open them, the problem is solved – most of the time. At other times, a caregiver is distracted, visitors' medicines are left within reach, another child "helps" . . . and you're in need of emergency assistance.

Here are some poison prevention tips. Be sure that every place where your child spends time is poison-proofed. Also be sure that everyone who cares for your children knows how to prevent poisonings.

Identify the most dangerous poisons in your home. *[SEE BELOW]*

- Store these items in their original containers.
- Replace child-resistant closures tightly.
- Lock medicines, household products, and other potentially dangerous poisons out of sight and reach of children.
- Read labels before giving or taking medicine–each and every time! Give the right dose to the right person at the right time.
- Give or take medicine only for its intended purpose.
- Don't let your children watch you taking medicine; children learn by imitation.
- Teach children to always ask an adult before eating or drinking anything. This won't work for very young children, but the message will gradually take hold.

No matter how careful you are, poison emergencies do occur. If you are prepared for a possible poisoning, there is a good chance that nothing dangerous will happen.

Put the emergency number of your poison center on or near your phone. Call your poison center before you have an emergency to get phone stickers. (To find the number, look inside the front cover of your phone book with other emergency numbers or ask your pediatrician.)

Keep ipecac syrup and/or activated charcoal on hand. The poison center may tell you to use one or the other after a poison emergency. (Ask your poison center what is recommended in your area.) Be sure that baby-sitters and other care providers know where to find the phone number and where to find your ipecac syrup or activated charcoal.

If someone does get into a poison, don't panic. Did each parent give a dose of cough medicine? Did someone get bitten by a snake? Did Junior think grandpa's pills were candy? Is there carbon monoxide leaking from a broken furnace? ***Call the poison center immediately.*** Bring the bottle or container to the phone.

If a chemical splashes in your eyes or on your skin, rinse with running water for at least fifteen minutes. Then, ***call the poison center immediately.***

If someone has breathed in a poison, get them to fresh air. Make sure they are breathing. Then, ***call the poison center immediately.***

Around the clock, poison centers provide emergency treatment information for all kinds of poison emergencies. The toxicology expert who answers your call will be a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. He or she will ask you what happened, get some information about the circumstances, and tell you what to do right away. Best of all, the entire situation can usually be handled over the phone. The poison center will stay in touch with you by phone until any possible problem is resolved. If an emergency department visit is needed, the poison center will call an ambulance and advise the paramedics. Then, the poison center staff will call the emergency department to give treatment information to the doctors and nurses who are waiting for you.

To avoid an unintentional poisoning, a little prevention goes a long way. But if the worst happens, and you find your child with hands in something other than the cookie jar, help is just a phone call away at the poison center.

THE MOST DANGEROUS POISONS:

➔ **Kitchen**: drain opener, oven cleaner, electric dishwasher detergent, medicines, iron pills, bug sprays, furniture polish

➔ **Bathroom**: medicines, iron pills, mouthwash, toilet bowl cleaner

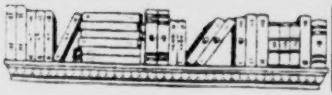
➔ **Bedroom**: medicines, artificial fingernail primer and glue remover

➔ **Living Areas**: alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and other tobacco products, lamp oil

➔ **Garage and Storage Areas**: antifreeze, windshield washer solution, gasoline, kerosene, turpentine, paint remover, pesticides, lawn chemicals

➔ **Outdoors**: wild mushrooms and some plants

Rose Ann G. Soloway, RN, MSEd, ABAT is the Associate Director, American Association of Poison Control Centers and Clinical Toxicologist, National Capital Poison Center, Washington, DC.



Library Resources

Books That Celebrate the Family

📖 ***Aunt Minnie McGranahan*** by Mary Skillings Prigger; illustrated by Betsy Lewin; Clarion Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.00. Overnight Minnie goes from a tidy life living alone to being the "mother" of nine nieces and nephews. But she doesn't get flustered. "The oldest looked after the youngest. The ones in the middle looked after each other. And Aunt Minnie looked after them all."

📖 ***The Baby Sister*** by Tomie dePaola; PaperStar; New York, 1999; Softcover $5.99. Tommy is very excited to be having a baby sister. Although Tommy and his Nana don't get along very well, both share with each other and the rest of the family the joy of the birth of the baby.

📖 ***Daddy Makes the Best Spaghetti*** by Anna Grossnickle Hines; Clarion Books; New York, 1988; Paperback, $5.95. Corey's favorite dinner is his father's special spaghetti. Not only can his dad cook, but he's warm and funny too.

📖 ***Dear Juno*** by Soyung Pak; illustrated by Susan Kathleen Hartung; Viking; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. Juno can't read the letters his grandmother writes to him in Korean, but he learns there are other ways to understand messages. Juno and his grandmother communicate by sending pictures and small objects, and much love. Perfect for little ones with loved ones living away.

📖 ***Grandma Summer*** by Harley Jessup; Viking; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. The old summer house doesn't look like much, but young Ben soon comes to love his vacation and the life at the beach with his grandmother.

📖 ***Hannah's Baby Sister*** by Marisabina Russo; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. Hannah eagerly anticipates her new baby sister. The problem is that the baby is actually a boy. A baby brother isn't what Hannah wanted, until she held him in her arms.

📖 ***In My Momma's Kitchen*** by Jerdine Nolen; illustrated by Colin Bootman; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. "Seems like everything good that happens in my house happens in my momma's kitchen." A collection of simply told and lovingly illustrated vignettes about the life that goes on in the family kitchen, from Nadene's music scholarship, to Momma's crab-apple jelly, and Daddy's corn pudding. A wonderful family book.

📖 ***Just Like a Baby*** by Rebecca Bond; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover, $14.95. Everyone is excited about the new baby and has something special to contribute to her cradle. At the end, the baby sleeps peacefully watched over by her family.

📖 ***Mama Mama*** by Jean Marzollo; pictures by Laura Regan; Harper Growing Tree; New York, 1999; Board Book, $5.95. This richly illustrated book is perfect for little ones, showing the love and caring between animals mothers and their babies.

📖 ***My Daddy*** by Susan Paradis; Front Street, Inc.; Ashville, NC, 1998; Hardcover, $15.95; Boardbook, $8.95. A charming book about a boys admiration for his father -- a man able to do wondrous things all in the context of daily life. A man who can touch his finger to the moon, and stay up way past midnight.

📖 ***Owl Babies*** by Martin Waddell; illustrated by Patrick Benson; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1992; Boardbook, $6.99. Three owl babies become very worried when they discover their mother is gone. Of course, she comes back because mothers always come back to their babies. A very reassuring message for little ones.

📖 ***Pete's a Pizza*** by William Steig; Michael Di Capua Books-HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $13.95. Pete's feeling quite grumpy. What's a parent to do? Put him on a table and turn him into a pizza. Knead him, twirl him, bake him on the sofa, and laugh and hug him.

📖 ***A Present for Mama Bear*** by Bonnie Staenberg; illustrated by Katy Bratun; Scholastic Inc.; New York, 1999; Softcover, $3.99. Edgar Bear wanted to give his mother flowers for her birthday, but it started to rain so he decided to paint a picture. A picture, though, wasn't quite enough. A cake would be better. Unfortunately, Mama discovers him on the kitchen floor covered with mud, paint and flour. All Mama really wants, though, is a clean Edgar and a big hug.

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LOS NIÑOS LLEGAN CON UN MANUAL DE INSTRUCCIONES

Como "Leer" a su Bebé

Sharon estaba mudando a su familia, incluyendo a su hija de nueve semanas, a 4.500 kilómetros de distancia, pero su difícil bebé lloraba y lloraba, creando un ciclo de dar de mamar que parecía durar 24 horas al día. El carro de bebé que había funcionado tan bien con su hermano mayor, solo produjo llantos. Hasta que su madre, loca de ganas de hacer sus tareas domésticas, movió a su bebé para que pudiera mirar la riqueza del mundo, y ver todos los colores, sonrisas y los movimientos a su alrededor. Sharon siguió prestándole atención a su bebé hasta que pudo descifrar lo que su hija estaba tratando de decir y encontrar una solución al problema. Jessie salió chupándose la mano y su madre jura que su hija no se ha sacado los dedos de la boca incluso durante el parto. Aunque ella encontró su pulgar rápidamente, la irascibilidad de su recién nacida no disminuyó hasta que su madre se dio cuenta que Jessie estaba más feliz de espaldas, en su cuna, con la caja de música tocando constantemente.

Como era la segunda, Jessie a veces se perdía en la confusión y ruido en la casa, pero su madre rápidamente aprendió como consolar su bebé cuando lo necesitaba. También descubrió que a Jessie no le parecía gustar los cambios y prefería entornos conocidos.

¿Cómo pudieron estas madres llegar a conocer a sus bebés tan rápidamente? ¿Cómo pudieron darse cuenta de los trucos necesarios para apaciguar y reconfortar a sus recién nacidos unos pocos días después de su nacimiento? La respuesta reside en la capacidad de un bebé de comunicar sus necesidades eficazmente y en la capacidad de los padres de escuchar, interpretar, y de responder exitosamente a esas necesidades.

Los padres se han lamentado por años que los bebés, a diferencia de los automóviles y aparatos domésticos, no vienen con manuales o libros de instrucciones, y que a menudo dejan a los padres nerviosos y perplejos sobre la mejor manera de cuidar a estas pequeñas y complicadas criaturas. E incluso con cientos de libros sobre ser padres en los estantes de las bibliotecas y librerías, las soluciones fáciles y las fórmulas generales no siempre funcionan.

A pesar de que cada niño es único en conductas y respuestas, los padres pueden aprender algunas pautas para descifrar el código de sus niños, aprendiendo a "leer" a sus niños, y comprender su conducta. Las buenas noticias son que los bebés están dispuestos a ayudarnos. A través de sus llantos de incomodo y dolor y las sonrisas de satisfacción y placer, los bebés dan una retroalimentación instantánea que le permite a los padres aprender a como cuidarlos.

TOCANDO LA ALARMA

Incluso un pequeño bebé de 3 kilos puede emitir un chillido penetrante que causa a un adulto a seis metros de distancia a dar un salto y a responder. Nuestros bebés lloran por algo. Necesitan algo y necesitan a un adulto que se los entregue. La mayoría de los padres, después de unas pocas semanas con sus recién nacidos pueden distinguir entre un grito súbito de dolor intenso, uno de malhumor, o el llanto conocido causado por la irritación del hambre. Los bebés deben tocar estas alarmas para asegurarse que los adultos los están cuidando, y por lo tanto persistirán hasta que los padres u otros lo hagan bien. El fuerte sonido de un bebé lactante le comunica a los padres que el hambre estaba causando el llanto. El persistente llanto de un bebé limpio y alimentado nos hace preocuparnos que estén enfermos o sufriendo dolor. El padre buscará a ver si quizás algún dedo está atrapado en alguna parte o una comezón causada por los pañales son la causa de la irritabilidad. La inevitable irritación antes de dormir puede poner nervioso a los padres al principio, pero el bebé, al quedarse dormido, nos demuestra que esto es parte de la rutina normal. Escuchamos a los sonidos de la cuna, pero el bebé nos ha enseñado a no preocuparnos.

CLAVES DE LOS TEMPERAMENTOS

Los investigadores por años han creído que los bebés tienen un estilo nato que describe la manera que enfocan nuevas situaciones y tareas. Este estilo, o temperamento, la da pistas a los padres en cuanto a como los niños resuelven naturalmente problemas y reaccionan a los eventos en su entorno. Un bebé pausado, cauteloso quizás mira los juguetes y los acomoda silenciosamente. Un bebé más difícil e irritable, quizás tira los juguetes por todas partes y no se da cuenta del placer de mirar y tocar el juguete. El niño que tiene hábitos regulares y previsibles parecen ser más fáciles para enseñarles a usar el baño y quizás duermen toda la noche fácilmente; el niño que es extremadamente sensible a los cambios en su ambiente puede tener más dificultades en la guardería infantil, o al ser llevado a las tiendas o en un automóvil con otras personas. La comprensión del temperamento de un niño puede ayudar a un padre a manejar y anticipar la conducta de un niño exitosamente. Saber cómo un niño responde a las cosas en su entorno puede ayudar a un padre a sentirse en control de su entorno y en control de la conducta de su niño. La lectura correcta de nuestros niños nos puede ayudar a anticipar como reaccionaran a las situaciones y ayudará a todos a preparar y planificar buenas soluciones y estrategias.

ECHE UNA MIRADA DISCRETA

Aunque muchos de nosotros nos pasamos horas y horas con nuestros hijos, son raras las veces en que realmente podemos observarlos en acción. Hay momentos en que los vemos en el patio recreos o los miramos con sus compañeros y a veces nos asombra lo que observamos.
¿Cómo pudieron haber crecido tan rápidamente?
¿Porqué ella es la única que está sentada sola?
¿Cómo puede decir que no tiene amigos cuando todos los niños están a su alrededor? Es en estas observaciones espontaneas y a veces secretas que podemos aprender mucho sobre nuestros niños. Ser testigos de estas fotografías de su conducta nos ayuda a ser más inteligentes sobre su funcionamiento y desarrollo.

Escuchar furtivamente el canto de un niño a medida que se duerme nos dice cuantas palabras verdaderamente sabe. Escuchar a nuestro preescolar tener una pelea imaginaria con sus figuras de acción que suena muy parecida a la altercado durante la comida de anoche y nos da pistas asombrosas sobre como nuestro niño comprendió lo que pasó. Escuchar a nuestro niño de cinco años contarle a su hermana menor que es bueno compartir las cosas nos dice cuanto los niños han aprendido sobre las reglas de la familia. Echar una mirada furtiva nos permite ver y aprender como le está yendo a nuestros niños.

Las fiestas de cumpleaños y las citas de juego nos ofrecen una maravillosa oportunidad para ver a nuestros niños interactuar con otros niños, y nos muestra lados de sus personalidades que no vemos en la mesa de la cocina. Observar a nuestros niños conversando con el pediatra, afanado por encontrar palabras para sus sentimientos, haciendo contacto con los ojos, inmerso en conversación, nos permite ver a nuestros niños de la misma manera en otros adultos lo hacen. También podemos ver en sus juegos y fantasías un espejo de nuestro éxito como padres.

De acuerdo a cualquiera definición, Alan es un padre dedicado. Le encanta el juego brusco e impulsivo con sus dos hijos pero al mismo tiempo insiste en la disciplina. Alan es padre de la misma manera que fue su padre -con muchas reglas y consecuencias. Sin embargo, fue bastante desconcertante escuchar a su hijo de siete años decirle a su hermano menor: "¡Tu eres malo, malo, malo! ¿No sabes escuchar"? Alan comprendió que estaba observando una rivalidad entre hermanos, pero estaba preocupado que su hijo grande escuchara que la disciplina en la casa era excesivamente dura y punitiva. Alan estaba preocupado que quizás su hijo de siete sentía que el era un "niño malo, malo, malo" incapaz de poder seguir todas las reglas en la casa. Alan observaba discretamente el drama entre sus hijos para medir cuan eficaz eran sus habilidades de padre. Empezó a pensar que quizás había una brecha entre sus intenciones, que eran ser un padre fuerte y consistente, y su conducta, que podría ser interpretada por un niño pequeño como dura y critica.

Aun cuando los resultados no siempre son agradables, la retroalimentación y la información que recibimos cuando miramos y observamos a nuestros hijos puede ser muy útil. Las fotografías de su funcionamiento también nos pueden ayudar a medir nuestra propia eficacia con los niños, creando una oportunidad para cambiar, o continuar, en nuestra conducta como padres.

CUALES SON LOS OBSTACULOS

A veces los niños no son buenos comunicadores. Algunos son tan irritables y están tan incómodos que parecen estar llorando todo el tiempo. O son rápidamente superados por el entorno y las pataletas son la norma y no la excepción. A veces los padres no saben escuchar y no prestan atención a sus éxitos como padres con los niños y no saben usarlos como una guía para futuras conductas. Y a veces los adultos están tan cansados por el trabajo y las presiones de la familia que apenas tienen tiempo y energía para dar el tipo de atención que los niños pequeños requieren.

Los niños con retrasos en el desarrollo o con problemas de salud crónicas pueden tener dificultad en distinguir dentro de si mismos que lo que está pasando y solo le pueden decir al mundo y a sus padres que algo no está bien. Los preescolares con retrasos motores o de desarrollo pueden parecer difíciles porque no pueden entrenar a los adultos en su entorno a reconocer sus necesidades. Sus indefensas y sus problemas en expresión personal también pueden confundir y frustrar a los adultos en su entorno.

EL NINO COMO MAESTRO

Pareciera, entonces, que aunque nosotros somos los adultos, son nuestros hijos los que a menudo son nuestros maestros. Del día en que nacen, nuestros niños se comunican constantemente -aunque no siempre bien. Nuestra tarea es prestar atención y escuchar los que nuestros hijos nos tratan de decir, a pesar de que estos puede ser una tarea frustrante y agotadora. En su conducta está el manual de instrucciones para cuidarlos. Todos sabemos la regla de ser padre que presume que los adultos tengan control sobre sus niños. En realidad, sólo cuando escuchamos a nuestros niños atentamente es cuando podemos guiar e influenciar su conducta más eficazmente. Al descifrar las claves en la comunicación de nuestros niños, escribimos el manual que nos dice como funcionan nuestros niños.

ESTILOS TEMPERAMENTALES

Los estilos temperamentales caen en tres categorías: fácil, lento para empezar y difícil. Aunque la mayoría de los padres juran que sus niños son difíciles, de acuerdo a los estudios iniciales de temperamento, la mayoría de los bebés, alrededor del 60%, caen en la categoría fácil. Los bebés fáciles no son los bebés que nunca lloran o se meten en problemas, son simplemente los que responden apropiadamente a los eventos en su entorno. Incluso los bebés fáciles pueden tener cólicos, pero cuando éste mal pasa, su estilo más adaptable reaparece. Los bebés fáciles pueden llorar cuando la mamá los deja con una niñera, pero se adaptaran de una manera apropiada y oportunamente a su nuevo entorno.

Un niño lento para empezar puede ser llorón y pegajoso, no sólo el primer día del jardín infantil, sino por semanas. La súbita enfermedad o ausencia de un maestro puede retrasarlos. Una mudanza a una casa nueva crea preocupaciones que no se disipan rápidamente, incluso cuando los padres han trabajado duro y parejo decorando su habitación con todas sus cosas favoritas.

Los niños difíciles no son niños malos, pero tienden a ser excesivos. Lloran fuerte y duro, y pueden parecer inflexibles y fastidiosos y tienen respuestas exageradas a muchas cosas.

Chris es el más joven de tres niños y a través de todo el embarazo su madre decía: "No es como los otros". A unas pocas semanas de su infancia, estaba claro que Chris era un poco más fastidioso y más irritable, y requería más trabajo y paciencia que sus hermanos. Cuando llegó a ser preescolar, Chris se había convertido en un niño amoroso, pero que a la vez era fastidioso para comer y vestirse, fácilmente abrumado por olores, sonidos y actividad, y muy particular e inflexible sobre sus necesidades. Su madre, ahora experimentada en las tareas de ser madre, leyó sus señales correctamente. Mientras que a regañadientes farfullaba sobre cuan tozudo era, también se dio cuenta que las fiestas de cumpleaños no eran entretenidas para el. La escuela lo cansaba ya que no era lo suficientemente flexible para trabajar en las actividades de grupo, y las fechas para jugar tenían que ser programadas para cuando estaba bien comido y descansado. El temperamento de Chris, a pesar de que tenía los elementos de un niño difícil, era afortunadamente lo suficientemente claro como para que la familia lo pudiera leer. Habiendo criado exitosamente a otros dos niños, sus padres no tenían tanto miedo de fracasar en manejarlo e intentaron hacer coincidir su entorno a su temperamento. A pesar de que no siempre era posible concertar un horario para satisfacer las necesidades de Chris, sus padres por lo menos podían anticiparlos y así disminuir la posibilidad de que tuviera dificultades. Chris llegó con su singular manual de instrucciones y al leerlo correctamente, sus padres pudieron manejar su conducta y crear un ambiente lleno de amor y apoyo.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW es la Directora de Right From the Start 0-3+ Center de North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center. Una escrito consultora y capacitadora independiente, Sra. Wolkoff frecuentemente aparece en televisión y radio.

Un Libro Sobre (Nomb de su Hijo): La Creació de su Propio Manual

Escribir un manual sobre los niños convierte a los padres en observadores acuciosos y también es entretenido. Aquí hay algunas preguntas para que pueda empezar. Si quiere ser formal, use cada pregunta como encabezamiento y escriba todas las respuestas. De lo

contrario, sólo piense sobre las respuestas.
Evidentemente, Ud. puede formular sus propias preguntas que reflejen la singular personalidad de su hijo.
¿Cómo le comunica su bebé o niño que está gozando de una actividad?
¿Cómo le comunica su bebé o niño cuando se ha cansado de una actividad?
¿Cuando se pone irritable su niño?
¿Cuando tiene hambre?
¿Cansado?
Aburrido?
¿Hay una hora específica durante el día?
¿Qué sirve para distraer a su niño?
¿Es fácil sosegar a su bebé?
¿Qué sirve para calmarlo?
¿Le gusta que lo tomen y le hagan cariño o es mejor zangolotearlo?
¿Su niño amanece feliz o de malas?
¿Qué pasa cuando su niño tiene que cambiar de una actividad a otra?
¿Se confunde o se resiste?
¿Pasa feliz de una cosa a otra?
¿Qué es lo que más le gusta hacer?
¿De qué otras actividades disfruta?
¿Qué es lo que menos le gusta hacer?
¿Cómo es su niño con otros niños?
¿Está ansiosa de jugar o prefiere esta sola con Ud.?
¿Tiene compañeros de juego favoritos?
¿Está feliz de estar con casi cualquier persona?
¿Es su niño activo?
¿Reposado?
¿Qué hace su niño en el parque o el en patio de recreo? Se adelanta a todos y se sube a los juegos?
¿Se va a jugar silenciosamente a la arena?
¿Se queda cerca de Ud. hasta que se siente cómodo?

Si su niña está pasada la infancia, quizás ella le puede ayudar a contestar alguna de estas preguntas. Y sólo como entretención, quizás a Ud. le gustaría contestar estas preguntas sobre su conducta.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp
Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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Fitness in the Preschool Years

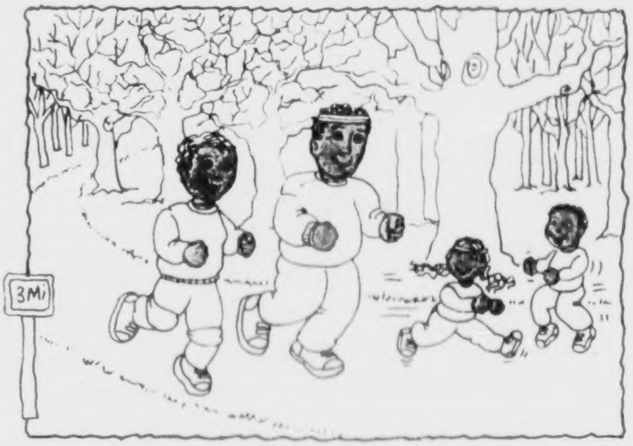
Now is the Time to Get Your Children Fit

Left on their own children are innately active. We are born with a love of movement and feel better when we are strong and vigorous. The same goes for diet. If provided with healthy choices, toddlers naturally regulate their intake of food and drink. So, where do they get so many unhealthy habits?

You guessed it. From their parents. It is easier to supervise a child watching TV than one playing outdoors. It is easier to keep a child at home than take her to a community recreation center to play ball. It is easier to hand a child a bag of chips than cut up fruit. And so we do it – at our children's expense. So, how do you get your child more fit? Make it a part of your family's life, and your child will follow your lead.

Start Early

Why is now the best time to be sure your child is active? The sooner children make exercise a regular part of their lives, the more likely they will stick with it into adulthood. Just like brushing teeth, exercise can and should be an everyday ritual.



Children who are less active tend to have poorer health attitudes and habits. They are more likely to eat too many fatty foods and take up smoking.

The long-term biological effects of an active lifestyle will make an enormous difference in your child's future health – exercise reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers – but the discipline, self-awareness, and priorities she sets to maintain an active lifestyle will spill into many other aspects of her life.

Maintaining the discipline to practice a sport, and setting goals to improve performance are behavior patterns that breed success at school and in the work place. Team sports help children learn to work with others for a common goal and share rewards and responsibilities.

Instilling a love of movement and teaching your children to enjoy physical fitness and a good diet will pay off in almost all aspects of their lives. What a wonderful gift to give them.

Getting Fit Together

Being active is the key to improving endurance, strength, flexibility, and body composition. You already have two things on your side to help your child become more fit. First, as we've said, a child's natural instinct is to be active. Children become sedentary because they pick up cues from the world around them.

Second, your children will follow your lead. No one influences your children more than you. They pick up your spoken and unspoken cues in all areas – including fitness.

Telling your child to be more active will be much more effective if you yourself are active. And it will be most effective if you actually include her in your activity. Children of active mothers are twice as likely to be active as children of inactive moms. Fathers have an even greater influence. Active dads are 3.5 times more likely to have active kids than sedentary dads.

There are many ways you can help your child develop a love of movement and activity.

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Here are the Basics

- **Take care of yourself**. When your child sees that you value your health and are willing to do things to keep it, such as exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet, your child will learn to respect her body and take care of it, too.
- **Keep your eyes and mind open**. The road to fitness can take many turns. Remember that the health benefits of exercise come from many different activities – walking, running, biking, swimming, dancing, skipping, kicking, throwing, hiking, tumbling and more. Help your child try a smorgasbord of activities.
- **Don't act like exercise is drudgery**. Project fitness and sports as interesting and enjoyable.
- **Maintain a healthy diet**. Don't model poor eating habits like skipping meals or filling up on high fat snacks.
- **Follow sensible training techniques**. Don't exercise through pain.
- **Be a good sport**. Have you ever seen a parent have an angry tantrum at a softball game? Be sure the messages you send your children are ones you will be proud of later in life.
- **Act in ways you want your child to emulate**...because you will be imitated. I often find myself looking for the closest parking spot at the mall. The time I waste driving around for that perfect spot! It would be quicker to just walk, and healthier too. But, in retrospect, what really frustrates me is that the message I'm sending my kids isn't right.

Starting from Scratch
The First Year

At this early age start by building your child's self-confidence and curiosity. Praise and encourage her movements. Place her in settings where she can interact with her environment (away from dangerous objects and activities that encourage you to say "no").

Start early with sound nutritional habits. Babies are the best judge of their caloric requirements. Feed your child when he is hungry. Don't force him to eat when he is not hungry. Don't use food as a reward, or to quiet a child.

Strategies for a Physically Fit Preschooler

Once your child is relatively mobile and verbal (by age two or so), she is ready to learn about the wonderful world of physical activity. Why not show your child basic throwing, kicking, and jumping skills? Children's boundless energy and willingness to please makes them wonderful pupils. And their endless enthusiasm makes them repeat and repeat their new-found skill until they have it right...or until they are encouraged to try another new "trick."

Don't worry if you're not very talented yourself. Your goal is to help your child understand the basics, and find enjoyment and confidence in executing them. Always present skills in a fun and supportive environment.

Encourage active play that incorporates various skills. Games such a tag, hid and seek, and catch are perfect examples of non-threatening, fun activities that help children develop stamina, speed, and their physical abilities.

Go to playgrounds and parks together to allow your child to mix with children of various ages and abilities. He'll be able to show off to the younger children, and learn from the older ones.

Sports Skills

Aside from physical skills, in order to play team sports, your child should be able to follow directions, understand basic rules for games, and play thoughtfully with other children. She should also be able to report back to you about what she did and how she felt about it to help you monitor the "fun factor" when you're not around.

When you play together, focus more on improving skills (playing catch or kicking a ball) then on playing complete games.

Watch sports with your child – especially if your child knows any of the players. This is the perfect time to explain the rules of the game, and praise good abilities and sportsmanship.

Do not tolerate bullying or dangerous play. Consistently stop improper behavior and firmly explain why it is not tolerated.

Be aware of what the school and community has to offer. Help find friends to work out and play with. If your schedule won't allow you to take your child to sporting events or practices, enlist other family members or neighbors. Possibly you can trade off with a neighbor. Your neighbor can take your child to practice on weekdays; in return, you can take the neighbor's child to games on weekends. Or, contact organizations such as Big Brother/Big Sister to help you get support for your child's activities when you can't be there.

Children stick to sports because they have fun. Aside from your duty as a good role model, you also need to be a good coach and cheerleader. Be sure your child is having fun in sports and do your best to keep fun the major factor in your child's exercise experience.

Listen to your child when she talks about sports. Look for what motivates her and what dampens her spirit.

Develop an understanding of what your child wants from sports – not all children want the same thing. Some children want to be part of a team, some want a challenge, while some want to be able to shout a lot.

Recognize your child's needs and find a balance between your needs and your child's. As important as activity is for kids, make sure it fits in with the rest of the family.

Keep your perspective. Each child is different. Don't judge your child by what your neighbor's child can do.

Plan activities that are fun, improve skills, and lead to self knowledge. These are the motivating factors, the reasons why kids stick to sports.

Ask positive questions after your child participates in sports, such as "What do you enjoy most?" or "What did you learn?" Ask about a specific skill you know he's trying to enhance or is proud of. Focusing on these areas will help your child continue to enjoy sports -- whether or not he's on a winning team.

Things to Avoid

Don't force kids to participate. Don't try to live out your childhood dreams in your son's or daughter's activities.

Don't berate or belittle your child. Mistakes happen. Winning isn't everything, fun is.

Sports should not be torture. Monitor practice, training, and games to be sure the kids are having fun.

Helping your child develop an active lifestyle can be one of the most enjoyable parts of parenthood. The more you exercise with your child the closer you will become. And, you will become stronger, fitter, and better – together!

Susan Kalish is the Executive Director of the American Medical Athletic Association and the American Running Association. She is author of "Your Child's Fitness: Practical Advice for Parents" (Human Kinetics, 1997). Susan enjoys staying active with her two children Alexa (6), and Matthew (8), and husband John.

We've Done It Again!

For the second year in a row, the *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* has been chosen as a Parents' Choice Approved winner. This nonprofit organization reviews children's publications, toys, and programs and gives its approval to the best products. We've just received the notification that our 1999 season was a winner. We always felt that way, now it's official!

Physical Activity Checklist

Which activities has your child done in the past few weeks? Which do you think your child would enjoy? Which do you think you'd enjoy doing with your youngster?

Basketball/hoops; handball/squash; badminton/tennis; golf; volleyball; bowling; children's games: like hop scotch and tag; jump rope; skating; bike riding; yoga; gymnastics; hula hoop; karate or other martial arts; after dinner walk; catch; touch football; soccer; dance

You don't have to do all these activities, or do them the regulation way. Set up a badminton net and just hit the birdie back and forth. Get out the soccer ball and kick it back and forth. Take a basketball down to the local park or court and practice shooting hoops. For littler ones, use a soft football or a plastic ball and just practice throwing and catching. Or put on some music and dance around the house.

Start moving, it will be wonderful for you and your

One Family's Plan

The most successfully fit families incorporate healthy living into all aspects of their lives. It won't work if you segment your "healthy living" to a specific time or day. Look for ways to develop family traditions that involve physical activity. The Wisor family of Derwood, Maryland came up with their own workable alternative to sedentary living.

"I noticed my girls plopped in front of the TV as soon as they came home from school," Julie Wisor, the mother of two told me. "So, our new rule is for every hour of TV we watch a day, we will also do something active. On days Kristin (age 8) has gymnastics, that's not hard, but Katie has to plan ahead." The solution for their 5-year-old daughter was arranged playdates. Children are naturally active if encouraged to go outside so playdates cut down on her tv watching and increased the amount of physical activity. When the weather turned colder, Katie decided to become more sports-oriented and play basketball and soccer.

The Wisors also developed active family traditions, such as going for walks after dinner on Sundays. During the warm weather months they brought a picnic for the whole family to cheer father Gary at softball games.

"We found we were becoming couch potatoes on vacations. Just going to the beach, eating, sunbathing, and eating some more. Now we plan at least one active holiday each year." These vacation can include camping, hiking, or biking trips. Train together to prepare for your trip.

The Wisors also involve the children in exercise programs at home. "When Katie was little, she'd dance while I did my aerobics tape. Later, we'd go for walks or bike rides together," said Julie. By keeping involved as your child progresses, you will have many common sports to share as your child grows. And that also help keep family relations strong.

Susan Kalish

• **For a free Family Fit Quiz, send a self-addressed stamped (55 cents) envelope to Family Fit Quiz, 4405 East West Highway, Suite 405, Bethesda, MD 20814.**

Physical Activity

You might not think "physical activity" when you think "book" but these will get you and your youngster up and moving.

Books for Kids

📖 ***The Big Book of Games*** by Dorothy Stott; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $17.99. Delightfully illustrated and filled with old and new games, the book is written for children to read but you can pick out games to try together. It includes outdoor games (e.g. hopscotch, freeze tag), indoor and party games (e.g. telephone, wastebasket basketball), car and singing games. Not all of them promote physical activity.

📖 ***From Head to Toe*** by Eric Carle; HarperCollins; New York, 1997; Softcover, $6.95. Humans imitate the actions of animals turning heads, lifting shoulders, wiggling hips and more. Fun for both parent and child.

📖 ***Jump*** by Steve Lavis; Lodestar Books - Dutton; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.99. This book is for little ones. Jump like a frog, swing like a monkey, and roar like a lion.

📖 ***Toddlerobics*** by Zita Newcome; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. Join the charming group of little ones as they waddle like a penguin, flip their fins, wiggle like a worm and more. Written in rhyme for even more fun.

Yo-Yos: *Depending on the age and level of physical coordination, a yo-yo may be more frustrating than fun for your child. But if your youngster is ready, so are the yo-yos.*

📖 ***The Yo-Yo Book*** by John E. Ten Eyck; illustrations by David Cain; Workman Publishing; New York, 1998; Game and book combination, $9.95. Includes history, types of yo-yos, and lots of tricks from basic to advanced, and a yo-yo.

📖 ***You Can Yo-Yo*** by Bruce Weber; Scholastic Inc.; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.50. Doesn't include the yo-yo, but the illustrations and pages are larger and easier to read. Twenty-five tricks are included along with information on history, yo-yo masters and more.

Jacks: 📖 ***The Jacks Book*** by Sally Chabert; Workman Publishing; New York, 1999; Game and book combination, $9.95. Because of the small parts this presents a choking hazard for children under the age of three. Lots of variations on the old favorite children's game of jacks. Contains 15 jacks, a ball and a drawstring jacks bag.

Outdoor Ideas: 📖 ***Classic Outdoor Games***; Klutz Inc.; Palo Alto, CA, 1997; Laminated fold-out, $4.95. Basic rules and descriptions for kids' games, especially good for groups.

📖 ***Jump Rope Rhymes***; Klutz Inc.; Palo Alto, CA, 1998; Personal-sized jump rope and book combination, $10.95. As advertised, lots of rhymes to use when your youngster jumps rope. Some of them are old favorites, some are silly, and some require counting and verbal skills.

For Teachers: 📖 ***Teaching the Nuts and Bolts of Physical Education: Building basic movement skills*** by A. Vonnie Colvin, Nancy J. Egner Markos, and Pamela J. Walker; Human Kinetics; Champaign, IL, 1999; Softcover, $23.00. Although really more for coaches and teachers, parents will find much that is interesting and useful. Includes worksheets, troubleshooting charts, and scripted lesson plans.

Physical Activity

❖ **Balloon Bounce**

This is a fun fame to play with your preschooler indoors, and a bit more challenging to play outdoors. Blow up a balloon and tie it off with a string. The goal is to see how long you and your youngster can keep the balloon aloft, gently batting it with your hand, shoulder, elbows etc. You can each have a balloon and see who can it aloft the longest or you can take turns using one balloon.

❖ **Catch the Bubbles**

You'll need a jar of bubble liquid and a wand for this activity. Depending on the amount of space available you or your youngster can run through the yard or park, or stand still while waving the wand to create a trail of bubbles. Your child's job is to try and catch them on a sheet of paper.

❖ **Copy Cat**

You and your youngster take turns performing different actions. One person demonstrates then the other must copy the action as closely as possible. Pat your head, jump on one leg, bounce a ball. This can also be played with several youngsters. Help is definitely allowed to add to the fun.

❖ **Animal Walk**

Show your youngster and her friends pictures of animals, or ask them which are their favorite animals. Now, take turns walking like each of the animals. Making the appropriate animals noise is not only allowed, but encouraged. Some possible creatures are:
crocodile; dog; cat; elephant; giraffe; inchworm; kangaroo.

❖ **Obstacle course**

Set up a simple obstacle course. It can be large plastic bottles, pots and pans, anything handy. The child has to go around the course you laid out performing the actions of her choice. She can skip, run, hop, bounce a ball, whatever she chooses.

❖ **Simon Says**

This is an old favorite game that's still fun. If there are several children involved, they take turns being Simon. Otherwise, you and your youngster can take turns. Simon calls out an action for the children to follow but only if the action is preceded by words "Simon says." For example: Simon says jump up and down. Now, the child has to jump up and down. If the command isn't preceded by "Simon says," anyone who does the action is out. For example: "scratch your back." If a child then scratches his back, he has to sit out the rest of the game. If you are playing with little ones, you may want to give "second chances" since the goal is to have a good time.

❖ **Movements and Memory**

Begin the game by asking a child to preform one specific movement such as "touch your toes." Then add a movement such as "touch your toes and touch your nose." The game continues as you add another and another movement to the sequence. See how many movements can be added before someone "forgets." Develops memory.

Dear Reader

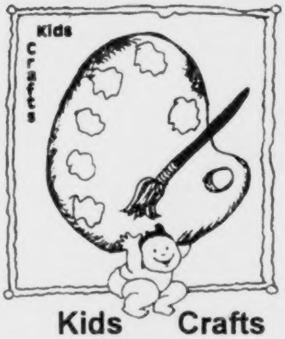
Time to get up and get moving. What? Moving? As in physical activity? Over the years I have discovered the joys of simply moving my body. Actually, I think I'm just grateful that all parts still work. I do a brisk walk after dinner, take long walks by the Long Island Sound (and enjoy the serenity of the lapping water). I try to build some form of physical activity into each day, even if it's parking in the spot furthest away from my office.

Physical activity just feels good. It's also one of the healthiest things we can do for our body and our mind. So, when you read the feature by Susan Kalish on physical fitness remember that activity comes in all flavors and it's good for every member of the family.

February is also multi-cultural month here at *P&pN* and the Library Resources section includes reviews of material certain to broaden everyone's awareness and appreciation for the diverse cultures which make up our one world.

Dawn Barhyte's column on craft activities has some great ideas for you and your youngster. There's even a Valentine's Day gift idea that's easy and fun.

See you next month!



Kids Crafts

Children are born artists, and nothing is more exciting than witnessing the spark of a child's imagination and the whimsical interpretation of an activity. As with any creative endeavor, it's the planning and doing that is paramount, not the finished product. Give your child free rein and see what develops. It's sure to be special.

Very Own Bird Feeder

You will need: Cardboard; Scissors; String; Peanut butter; Bird seed *For bird journal:* Paper; Colored pencils; crayons

First, have your child cut out a shape of her choice using the cardboard. Then, let her cover the entire shape with peanut butter. Finally, have her sprinkle bird seed to cover the surface. Punch a hole in the top and run the string through it. Place the feeder in a tree that can be viewed easily from inside. To extend the activity, bird watch with your child and start a nature journal. Encourage her to record the birds seen by drawing with colored pencils or crayons. Let her dictate to you a description of each one. You can even take a trip to your local library and take out a bird book. Help your child identify the birds in the journal, recording the names for her.

● *Remember: If you begin to feed birds it is important to continue to do so as birds become used to finding food in certain locations. This is especially important in the northern areas when winter weather makes food very scarce and difficult to find.*

Valentine Sachets

You will need: Red, pink, or purple felt; Paper doilies; Lace; Sequins; Glitter; Craft glue; Cottonballs; Potpourri oil or perfume; Scissors

First cut two identical hearts out of whatever color felt your child selects. Then, encourage him to freely embellish them with his choice of materials. While working with the materials ask your child to identify some significant people in his life and why they are special. Then, ask him to place several drops of the potpourri oil on the cotton balls, place them within the two pieces of felt, and glue the hearts together. Glue a lace loop to the top and hang from a piece of ribbon. This makes a lovely Valentine's Day gift.

Snow Sculpture and Paintings

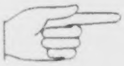
You will need: Ivory Snow or similar kind of soap flakes (not laundry detergent); Water; Dark construction paper.

Have your child whip the soap flakes with a little water to make "snow." Encourage your child to feel and squeeze it, molding it into interesting shapes. This tactile experience is very satisfying in itself, but to extend the activity, use the "snow" like fingerpaint and have your child create a snowy scene on the dark construction paper.

Colorful Serendipity

You will need: Water; Paint brushes; Sponge; Tempera paints; White paper

Start by having your child dip the large brush or sponge into the water and create a wash over the entire sheet of paper. Now, using a smaller brush, encourage your child to apply small areas of the tempera paint directly over the water. The color will automatically spread into fascinating shapes and designs. Your child can paint other colors next to the wet first coat of tempera. The colors will naturally mix and blend to create a soft-edged painting. The patterns will be limitless and will prompt your child to experiment further. Frame these abstracts for a wonderful valentine.



Fingerprint Fun

You will need: Stamp pad in assorted colors; Crayons; Colored markers; White paper; Paper towels

Begin by having your child press his fingertips on a stamp pad firmly enough to make a clear impression, or print, on the paper. Using the paper towel, clean his fingertips and dip them again into another color. Encourage your child to form shapes by printing in different ways with different fingers, overlapping colors if he wishes.

Let the prints dry well and later on your child can make them into silly shapes, animals, or whatever, by adding details such as eyes or tails with the drawing materials. He can even make up a story about his creation.

Dawn Marie Barhyte

Let's Celebrate! *It's a Multicultural World*

🕮 ***Between Earth & Sky*** by Joseph Bruchac; illustrated by Thomas Locker; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, 1999; Softcover, $7.00. A book about some of the special places of Native American cultures, their legends and stories from across the country. At the end is a map of the country with the locations of these original Native nations.

🕮 ***Can You Count Ten Toes?*** by Lezlie Evans; illustrated by Denis Roche; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover, $15.00. Counting from one to ten in ten different languages.

🕮 ***The House with No Door: African riddle-poems*** by Brian Swann; illustrated by Ashley Bryan; Browndeer Press-Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. The book brims with colorful images containing hints to the riddles. Here's one example: I go everywhere with a person who never lets me rest. At the end of the book are the answers, and the source for the riddles. Oh, the answer to this one? A shadow.

🕮 ***Isla*** by Arthur Dorros; illustrated by Elisa Kleven; Puffin Books; New York, 1995; Softcover $5.99. "When Abuela, my grandma, tells me stories, we can fly anywhere." Thus starts a enchanting fantasy about a little girl who flys off in her imagination with her grandmother. They visit the family on the Caribbean island where the grandmother grew up.

Library Resources

🕮 ***Magid Fasts for Ramadan*** by Mary Matthews; illustrated by E. B. Lewis; Clarion Books; New York, 1996; Hardcover, $15.95. Magid's family thinks he is too young to fast for Ramadan so he decides to elude his mother's attempts to feed him. His family eventually finds out and offers a resolution. The book is a gentle and lovely introduction to Ramadan and some of the beliefs of Islam.

🕮 ***The Old Man & His Door*** by Gary Soto; illustrations by Joe Cepeda; PaperStar; New York, 1996; Softcover, $5.99. If a person wasn't paying attention, the Spanish word for door "puerta" sounds very similar to the word for pig "puerco." And that's how the old man ended up carrying a door to the picnic. Oddly enough it turned out to be a very good idea. In this charming tale, man and his door help many people along the way, receiving thank-you gifts of food for the picnic. And the door became a table.

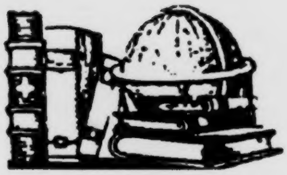
🕮 ***Somewhere Today: A book of peace*** by Shelley Moore Thomas; photographs by Eric Futran; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. "Somewhere today...someone is being a friend instead of fighting." An uplifting book about peace and harmony in the world, and the small things that make life special.

🕮 ***Tea with Milk*** by Allen Say; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover, $17.00. How would it feel to be brought back to the country in which your parents were born, when it is so different from the country in which you are raised? For Masako, known to her American friends as May, it was a wrenching experience, made even more difficult by the differences in the freedom given to women in the US and in Japan. Based on the true story of Allen Say's mother, it shows the determination of a young woman, and the understanding that home is a place we make for ourselves.

🕮 ***The Ugly Vegetables*** by Grace Lin; Talewinds (Charlesbridge Publishing); Boston, 1999; Hardcover $15.95. A little girl and her mother start a garden but instead of the lovely flowers the neighbors are planting, the mother is growing Chinese vegetables. As the flowers bloom the little girl becomes discouraged, seeing her lumpy, bumpy vegetables. But when her mother makes a very special soup (recipe included in the book), the neighbors line up with armloads of flowers to trade for bowlfuls of soup.

🕮 ***Three Cheers for Catherine the Great!*** by Cari Best; illustrated by Giselle Potter; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1999; Hardcover. $16.95. Family and friends are throwing a No Present birthday party for Catherine. Many wonderful No Presents are given, but Catherine's granddaughter gives one of the best. Sara decides to help her grandmother, born Ekaterina in Russia, read and write English. And her grandmother will help Sara learn Russian.

♪ ***World Playground: A musical adventure for kids***; Putumayo World Music; New York, 1999; phone-888-788-8629. CD, $15.98; cassette, $10.98. This is a delightful compilation of music from twelve countries spanning a range of musical styles. The booklet which accompanies the CD includes the words to the songs, their translation into English and information about the song and the country. The whole family will enjoy listening (and dancing) to this album.



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NEWSLETTER

North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

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Buen Estado Físico en los Años Preescolares

Ahora es el Momento para que sus Niños Estén en Buen Estado Físico

Los niños son activos de nacimiento. Nacemos con un amor al movimiento y nos sentimos mejor cuando somos fuertes y vigorosos. Con la dieta es lo mismo. Si se les presenta opciones sanas, los niños naturalmente regulan su ingestión de alimentos y bebidas. ¿De donde sacan entonces tantos hábitos poco saludables?

Ud. ya lo sabe. De sus padres. Es mucho mas fácil supervisar a un niño que mira televisión que a uno que juega al aire libre. Es mucho más fácil mantener un niño en casa que llevarlo al centro comunitario a jugar a la pelota. Es mucho más fácil pasarle una bolsa de papas fritas que prepararle un plato de frutas. Y todo esto lo hacemos a costas de nuestros niños. Cómo logramos que nuestro hijo esté en mejor estado físico? Haga del ejercicio una parte de la vida familiar y su hijo seguirá su ejemplo.

Empiece Temprano

¿Por qué ahora es el mejor momento para asegurarse que su niño sea activo? Entre más pronto los niños hacen del ejercicio una parte regular de sus vidas, existe más posibilidad que sigan haciendo ejercicio cuando sean adultos. Al igual que lavarse los dientes, el ejerció puede y debe ser un rito cotidiano.

Los niños que son menos activos tienden a tener malos hábitos y peores actitudes hacia la salud. Tienen más posibilidad de comer demasiada comida grasosa y comenzar a fumar.

Los efectos biológicos a largo plazo de un estilo de vida activo serán súmamente importantes para la salud futura de su hijo. El ejercicio disminuye el riesgo de enfermedades cardiacas, diabetes, y algunos cánceres. Pero la disciplina, la auto conciencia, y las prioridades que esta fija para mantener un estilo de vida activa, afectará muchos otros aspectos de su vida.

Mantener la disciplina de practicar un deporte y de fijar metas para mejorar el desempeño son patrones conductuales que gestan éxito en la escuela y en el trabajo. Los deportes de equipo ayudan al niño a aprender a como trabajar con otros hacia una meta común y compartir satisfacciones y responsabilidades.

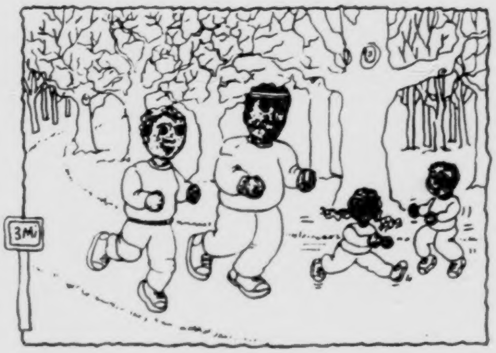
Inculcar un amor al movimiento y enseñarles a sus hijos a gozar de un buen estado físico y de una buena dieta, será provechoso en casi todos los aspectos de su vidas. Qué maravilloso regalo se les entrega.

Poniéndose en Buen Estado Físico Juntos

Ser activo es la clave para mejorar resistencia, fuerza, flexibilidad, y composición corporal. Ud. ya tiene dos cosas a su favor para ayudar a su niño a estar en mejor condición física. Primero, como dijimos, el instinto natural de un niño es estar activo. Los niños se ponen sedentarios porque reciben señales del mundo que los rodea.

Segundo, los niños lo seguirán. Nadie tiene tanta influencia sobre sus niños como Ud. Ellos aprenden sus señales explícitas o implícitas en todo, incluyendo el buen estado físico.

Decirle a su hija que sea más activa será mucho más eficaz si Ud. es activa. Y será incluso más eficaz si Ud. la incluye en su actividad. Las hijas de madres activas tienen la posibilidad de ser dos veces más activas que las hijas de madres inactivas. Los padres tienen incluso más influencia. Los padres activos tiene 3.5 veces la posibilidad de tener hijos activos que los padres sedentarios. Hay muchas maneras en que usted puede ayudar a un niño a desarrollar un amor por el movimiento y la actividad.



Esto es lo Básico

Cuídese bien. Cuando su hijo ve que Ud. valora su salud y está dispuesta a hacer cosas para mantenerla, haciendo ejercicios regularmente, y comiendo una dieta saludable, su hija aprenderá a respetar su cuerpo y a cuidarlo.

Mantenga sus ojos y su mente abierta. El camino al buen estado físico tiene muchas vueltas.

Recuerde que los beneficios del ejercicio para la salud proviene de muchas actividades como caminar, correr, andar en bicicleta, nadar, bailar, patear, tirar la pelota, paseos en el campo, saltar y muchas otras cosas. Ayuda a su niño a probar un menú completo de actividades.

No actúe como que el ejercicio es aburrido, o que la buena nutrición tiene mal sabor. Proyecte que el buen estado físico y una dieta sana es interesante y agradable.

Mantenga una dieta saludable. No sea un mal modelo de malos hábitos alimenticios, saltándose comidas y llenándose con bocadillos que contienen alto contenido de grasa.

Siga técnicas de entrenamiento sensatas. No haga ejercicios con dolor. Sea un buen deportista. ¿Ha visto alguna vez a un padre que le da una pataleta en un partido de béisbol? Asegúrese que los mensajes que le envía a sus hijos sean los que la enorgulloseran más adelante en la vida.

Actúe de la manera que Ud. quiere ser emulada por su hijo, porque lo será. Frecuentemente, me encuentro buscando el estacionamiento más cerca en el mall. ¡El tiempo que pierdo manejando para buscar el estacionamiento perfecto! Sería más rápido simplemente caminar, y además sería más saludable. Pero mirando hacia atrás, lo que realmente me frustra es el mensaje que le estoy dando a mis hijos, el que no es apropiado.

Empezando de Cero -El Primer Año

En esta temprana etapa, empiece por cultivar la curiosidad y confianza de su hija. Elogie y aliente sus movimientos. Póngala en entornos donde ella pueda interactuar con su ambiente (lejos de objetos peligrosos y de actividades que le impulse

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a Ud. a decir "no").

Empiece temprano con buenos hábitos nutricionales. Los bebés son los mejores jueces de sus necesidades nutricionales. Alimente a su hija cuando tenga hambre. No la obligue a comer cuando no tiene hambre. No use la comida como recompensa o para apaciguar a un niño.

Estrategias Para un Preescolar en Buenas Condiciones Físicas

Una vez que su hija sea relativamente móvil y hable (alrededor de los dos años), ella está lista para aprender sobre el maravilloso mundo de la actividad física. ¿Por qué no le enseña a su hija las habilidades básicas de tirar, patear y saltar? Su inconmensurable energía y su disposición a complacer los hace maravillosos estudiantes. Y su infinito entusiasmo los hace repetir y repetir sus nuevas habilidades hasta que las perfeccionan, o hasta que son alentados a probar otro "truco".

No se preocupe si Ud. no tiene mucho talento. Su meta es ayudar a su hijo a comprender los fundamentos, y que gocen y adquieran confianza en su práctica. Siempre instruya las habilidades deportivas en un entorno entretenido y de apoyo.

Aliente juegos de mucha actividad que incorporen varias habilidades. Jugar a la pinta, a la escondida, a agarrar la pelota, son ejemplos perfectos de actividades entretenidas, seguras, y que ayudan a los niños a desarrollar resistencia, velocidad, y sus habilidades físicas. Vaya al parque y permítale a su niño a juntarse con niños de distintas edades y habilidades. De esa manera podrá lucirse con los niños más pequeños y aprender de los más grandes.

Habilidades Deportivas

Fuera de sus habilidades físicas, su hija debe poder seguir instrucciones, comprender las reglas fundamentales de los juegos, y jugar inteligentemente con otros niños. Ella también debe poder informarle sobre qué lo que hizo y qué sintió, para que Ud. pueda supervisar el "factor entretención" cuando Ud. no está.

Cuando Uds. jueguen juntas, enfoque más en mejorar las habilidades (tirando o pateando la pelota) en vez de jugar partidos completos. Mire deportes junto con su hija, especialmente si su hija conoce a algunos de los jugadores. Este es el momento perfecto para explicarle las reglas del juego y aplaudir las habilidades y la ética deportiva.

No tolere el matonaje o los juegos peligrosos. Siempre detenga conductas inapropiadas y explique firmemente por qué no son toleradas.

Sepa qué puede ofrecer la escuela o la comunidad. Ayude a encontrar amigos con los cuales entrenar o jugar. Si su horario no permite llevar a su hija a eventos deportivos o entrenamientos, consiga que otros miembros de la familia o vecinos la lleven. Posiblemente se puede concertar algo con un vecino. Su vecina puede llevar a su hija al entrenamiento los días de semana y Ud. puede llevar a la hija de su vecina los fines de semana. O contacte a una organización como Big Brother/Big Sister para que la ayuden a apoyar las actividades de su hija cuando Ud. no puede estar.

Los niños persisten en jugar deportes porque se entretienen. Fuera de su deber de ser un buen modelo de conducta, Ud. también tiene que ser una buena directora técnica y alentar a su hija. Asegúrese que su hija lo está pasando bien con los deportes y haga todo lo posible para que la diversión sea un factor predominante en la experiencia física de su hija.

Escuche a su hija cuando habla sobre deportes. Vea qué es lo que la motiva y que la desalienta.

Desarrolle una comprensión sobre qué quiere su niña de los deportes, ya que no todos los niños quieren la misma cosa. Algunos niños quieren ser parte de un equipo, algunos quieren un desafío, mientras que otros quieren poder gritar desaforados.

Reconozca las necesidades de su hija y busque un equilibrio entre las necesidades de su hija y las suyas. Aunque la actividad física es muy importante para los niños, asegúrese que sea compatible con las necesidades del resto de la familia.

Mantenga su perspectiva. Cada niño es distinto. No juzgue a su niña por lo que puede hacer la hija de los vecinos.

Planifique actividades que son entretenidas, que mejoran las habilidades físicas, y que llevan al auto conocimiento. Estos son los factores que motivan y las razones por qué los niños perseveran con los deportes.

Haga preguntas positivas después que su hija participa en deportes, cómo ¿"Qué te gusta más"? o ¿"Qué aprendiste"? Pregunte sobre qué habilidad específica está tratando de mejorar o de la que esta orgullosa. Enfocar en estas áreas le ayudará a su hijo a continuar a gozar de los deportes, aunque no esté en un equipo ganador.

Cosas que Deben Evitarse

No obligue a los niños a participar. No trate de realizar sus sueños de niño en las actividades de su hijo o hija.

No rete y no se ría de su hija. Siempre ocurren errores. Ganar no es todo, entretenerse lo es.

Los deportes no deben ser una tortura. Vigile el entrenamiento, prácticas, y los partidos para asegurarse que los niños lo están pasando bien.

Ayudar a su hijo a desarrollar un estilo de vida activa puede ser una de las cosas mas agradables de ser padre. Entre más ejercicio hace con su hijo más se acercara a él. Y ambos serán juntos más fuertes, más saludables, y mejores.

Susan Kalish es Directora Ejecutiva de la American Medical Athletic Association y la American Running Association. Es autora de Your Child's Fitness: Practical Advi for Parents (Human Kinetics, 1997). A Susan le gusta mantenerse activa con sus dos hijos Alexa (6) y Mathew (8) y su marido John.

Para obtener una copia gratis de Family Fit Quiz, mande un sobre con 55 centavos de franqueo a Family Fit Quiz, 4405 East West Highway, Suite 405, Bethesda, MD 20814.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

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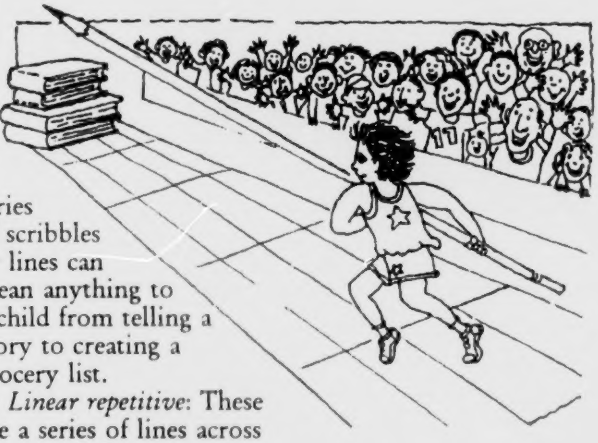
Developing the Writer In Your Child

As I watched my five-year-old granddaughter, her mouth tight with determination, gripping her pencil as she carefully formed her letters, I was awe struck by how far she had come since her first magic marker scribbles at age two. This infatuation with her progress exists despite the fact that my professional life has put me in contact with thousands of elementary school children each year. However, even my long career in education can not rival the benefits derived from observing, first hand, the developmental stages of the children in my own family from "scribbler" to "writer."

The literary development of children is not only amazing to witness, but also brings to light how much young children are capable of learning. When we make assumptions that children can't write, or can't learn to read because they are not "old enough," I can only share my experiences which prove otherwise. Young children, when exposed to language and taught effectively, can write and acquire a vocabulary far beyond is expected.

Beginning in kindergarten or even nursery school, children believe they can write. They start with a series of scribbles, and then ask an adult, "What does this say?" And while the child may learn to speak at a very early age with virtually little effort, the child as a writer must learn very specific skills in order to transfer what he wants to say into what he wants to write.

From their earliest years, children are eager to use writing implements–a crayon, magic marker (washable of course), or even a pencil. As they start to communicate on paper, parents might want to become familiar with where their children fall on the continuum of writing stages.



Stages of Writing

✦ *Picture writing*: Many children will tell stories from pictures they have drawn and consider this their "writing."

✦ *Scribble writing*: A series of scribbles or lines can mean anything to a child from telling a story to creating a grocery list.

✦ *Linear repetitive*: These are a series of lines across or up and down a page that the child believes looks like adult writing. It is at this stage a child is likely to distinguish drawing from writing.

✦ *Forms and circles*: Children replicate letters of the alphabet, usually X,T, S, and O. By this stage most children understand that they are writing and expect adults to 'read' what they have written.

✦ *Invented spelling stage*: Children at this level have some understanding of the sounds letters make. They use a combination of letters, or even numbers, as words (I C U, or I C U 2), or some sound-symbol relationships (PEPL for people, or LUV for love), or visual memory words such as; Mommy, Daddy, Stop, or even McDonald's.

Your child may skip stages altogether, or take a longer time to go from scribbling to letter writing. If your child is not a phonetic learner, understanding the sounds made by the different letters, he or she may not be a successful inventive speller. Many children are far more comfortable with memorizing words and learning the "book" spelling than trying to sound out words, and both styles of learning work. I have always believed that by offering children an instructional balance, they will seek

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out what functions best for them.

Once your child is writing beyond a scribble, you might want to assess his independent writing level.

1. Alphabet (letters only)
2. Word (any recognizable word)
3. Word group (any two-word phrase)
4. Sentence (a simple sentence that asks a question or gives information)
5. Punctuated story (two or more sentences that stay on a topic)
6. Paragraphed story (two or more parts to a sequence of ideas)

While it's always helpful to have this information, you should not let the results deter you from teaching your child to create. Questions like "where to begin" or "where to go" are often asked by parents interested in encouraging their children to become comfortable writers. While I'm sure you've often been told that praise and encouragement will nurture children to become fluent writers, this is not enough. Children want and need guidance.

How to Help Your Child Become a Literate Writer

It is not enough to leave writing to a stream-of-consciousness process, that will produce content, but not structure. The road to literate and confident writers blends the best of creativity with learned skills that are lifelong tools. While you don't want to impede a youngster's love of writing, you can gently encourage the use of a dictionary to discover the book spelling of a word. If poor grammar is an issue for older children, you might want to play a game to get your child to tell you what sounds better. As parents, you can monitor your child's writing. Take the time to discuss his or her progress with the teacher.

Read Aloud for Early Literacy

From their early years, children are read stories. They learn that this kind of writing is different from speaking, that stories sound different from every-day speech. Stories have words like "once upon a time" and "many years ago." They come to understand that a story is a special, organized way of relating a series of events. By reading stories to your young child, using unfamiliar words until they become familiar, and discussing what happened first, next, after that, and finally – you are providing the foundation for story writing. From read-aloud stories, you can teach your young child to write by demonstrating the concepts of print.

Concepts of Print

As you read library books or even stories that your child has dictated to you, try these strategies to help her become familiar with the conventions of printed words:

- **Words are written from left to right**. Point to the text and demonstrate that words are written from left to right on a page.
- **Words are made up of letters**. Show your child that letters make words – start with his name, family members' names, and other familiar words.
- **Sentences are made up of words, separated by spaces**. Have your child dictate what he wants written and point out the spaces between each word; tell him to put his finger between each word to indicate the space separating the words.
- **We can use special marks to provide meaning to a sentence**. As you read to your child, make mention of the tone or inflection of a sentence. This suggests whether to use a question mark or an exclamation mark, rather than a period which is just for a "telling" sentence.

Dictation and Modeled Writing

Young children will not be able to write independently, but they will enjoy learning to create stories from dictated writing. Your child may draw a picture and want to create a

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More Writing Activities to Inspire Children

Want some more ideas for inspiring youngsters to create and write? Here are some suggestions.

- **Impossible days**. Suggest that your child write a story about a day when only impossible things happened. Example: "While my father was riding his crayon, a camel flew in and kissed my mother on the cheek." The more impossible, the better. The joy of this type of story is that it invites children to search their minds for startling words and combinations.
- **First sentences**. Help your child start a story by providing a first sentence that sets up a strange or intriguing situation. For example: "On Saturday morning I noticed a flower beginning to grow out of the center of my forehead." It takes creative and connected thinking to make a story out of such ideas.
- **Photostories**. Suggest that children flip through a magazine until they find an interesting photograph. Then, have them dictate a story to you about what happened before, during, and after the photograph was taken. This idea also works well with paintings and family photographs. Whatever the subject matter, the story will help your children think logically and creatively about events.
- **Dialogues**. Suggest that your child write (or dictate to you) a conversation between two related objects, like a pencil and paper, a fork and meat, their own feet and the sidewalk. How would it feel to be the floor? How would it feel to be feet? Creating dialogues helps children think about the ways objects or ideas are linked.

Adapted with permission from Words to Stories, a publication of Teachers & Writers Collaborative and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information write: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003, 1-212-691-6590; Arts in Education, National Endowment for the Arts, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20506

story about what she has drawn. Because her ability to think and imagine exceeds her ability to put words on paper, she dictates her story to you. You might ask her, "Tell me what is happening in your story," or other questions to encourage creative thought and structure for narratives. You then write her words on the paper. Make sure that you point out the concepts of print discussed in the previous section.

If your child is capable of forming letters, ask her to imitate what you have written underneath your work. You might also try the Magic Pencil technique. Form the words with a yellow marker and have your child retrace the words with a pencil.

Modeled writing by a parent is also helpful. You can create a story for your child, write a grocery list, a letter, a few descriptive sentences about your pet or a member of the family. Point out all the concepts of print as you write.

The Reading/Writing Connection

I have always felt that it is important for children to have ample opportunities to write, as well as to read. We know from research that children who read are not necessarily good writers, but children who write are always good readers.

Children begin to understand that writing is simply their speech put on paper, edited with marks that indicate a stop (period) or question (question mark). At this point, children become even more comfortable with putting their thoughts and ideas down on paper.

Encourage your child's literacy by demonstrating how to write down the words he wants to say. By saving these words in a box, or in a journal, you are helping him to develop as a writer and reader.

One strategy that you might try is the A-Z Listing Game. Have your child identify all the familiar items in the kitchen, bedroom, or yard. Create an A-Z list and cut out or draw a picture next to the word. This list can be kept in a special journal divided into sections like Animal Words, Kitchen Words, Family Words, Food Words, etc.

JACOB WRITES
HIS FIRST "LETTER" TO GRANDMA

Power Words

There are also words your children will use as they begin to write and construct sentences. These words may not be introduced as reading words until the primary grades. Making these words available empowers your child to enlarge his vocabulary.

Examples of words on a Power Word list are: *an, and, because, can, could, do, every, etc.* Once you discover which words your children want to say in their stories, write them on an A-Z Power Words list so they can learn them and use them again. Over the years, your child will have many opportunities to collect and store words for writing. The more words she can collect, the greater the potential will be for her to transfer this knowledge to reading.

The Importance of Writing

Throughout his life, your child's literacy will be judged by the way in which he writes and speaks. While this is certainly a powerful enough reason for acquiring writing skills, there are other valuable aspects to written communication. Psychologists and teachers have long felt that writing is a wonderful catharsis for children to express their emotions and thoughts. Additionally, writing is a form of expression which society has always held in high esteem.

Endless enjoyment can be derived by observing all the delightful thoughts and words your child commits to paper. Some of the most wonderful moments in my life, as a parent and grandparent, have come when I have taken the time to share in what my little ones have written...whether I could read it or not. From these beginning steps, to the later years when we have to be more concerned with structure, mechanics, and organization, we play an infinitely important role. Our responsibility is not as co-author, but rather as an interested audience, a patient teacher, and a gentle editor. Most certainly, you will experience a thrill when you witness your child marrying the world of words to that of thought through her pencil or crayon. As a cheerleader for writing, you should always remind your young writer that, "If you can think it.....you can say it. And if you can say it, you can write it!"

Diane Gess, Ed.D. is the co-founder and President of "The Write Track"®, a nationally known writing program. She is a recognized specialist in staff development and curriculum design. In addition, her publications cover topics on reading, language arts, parenting issues, and student texts from primary to college level.

Moving?

Remember to send us your change of address 4 to 6 weeks before you move. Send info. to:

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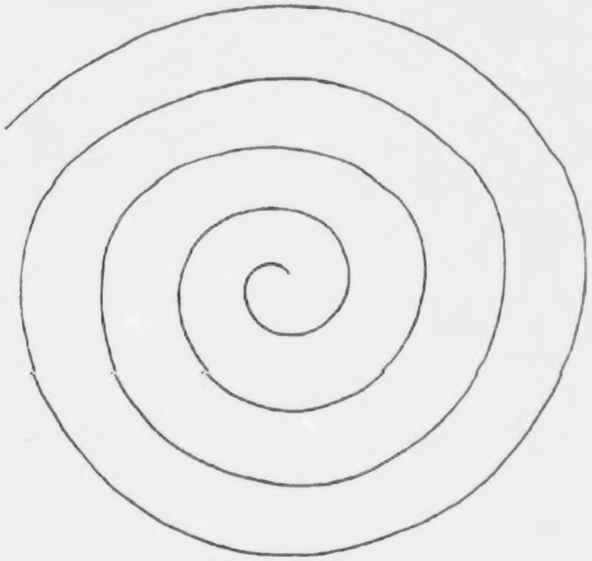
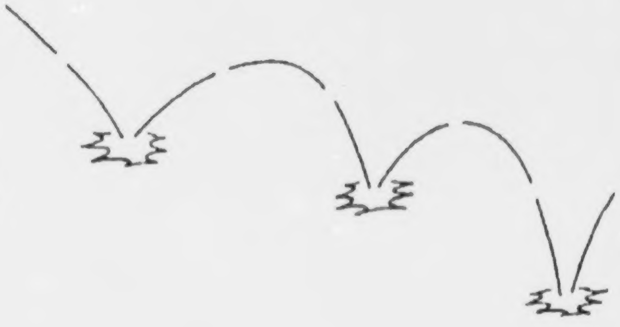
Poemakers

Dave Morice is the creator of Poemakers -- sheets of white paper with special pre-printed drawings. As part of their designs these inventive forms have blank lines where the words can be written in to create a fusion of word and shape. "Both the drawings and their blank lines are springboards for writing," writes Mr. Morice.

We have reproduced one of Mr. Morice's poemakers below and adapted another, simplifying it for use with younger children. You and your child can, of course, invent your own poemakers and have double the fun and creativity.





Dave Morice taught Children's Literature at the University of Iowa for seven years. He has a book published by Teachers and Writers, Inc., called "The Adventures of Dr. Alphabet: 104 Unusual Ways to Write Poetry in the Classroom and the Community."

For more information on poemakers:
Poemakers, by Dave Morice, Teachers Writers Magazine, November-December, 1999. A publication of Teachers & Writers Collaborative.

P&P NEWSLETTER
2000

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Dear Reader

With the feature this month by Dr. Diane Gess we focus on one of the most basic and important skills...writing. Whether children's stories, mysteries, science, political essays, or whatever your personal favorites, we'd be a far poorer world without the written word.

All this to say that we consider the ability to take ideas, develop and organize them, and put them down on paper in an interesting and perhaps even engaging manner to be a necessary part of communication. But what do **kids** do with writing? Explore their thoughts and ideas, developing them into prose able to take a reader into their heads and their hearts.

Without writing we have no access to the minds of others. We live forever locked in our own heads. Yes, we can speak thoughts, but spoken words drift upon the wind and are gone. It is only when we commit them to paper that we can really communicate our emotions, knowledge, and experiences.

In addition to the feature, we have several creative writing suggestions from Teachers & Writers Collaborative as well as the unique "Poemakers" by Dave Morice. Together they will kindle your child's enthusiasm for writing. And perhaps rekindle yours too.

Spring is coming! Spring is coming! I'm very excited about this. I can appreciate the beauty of a desolate winter beach, and wonderland of a world blanketed in snow. But spring means renewal – of the earth and spirit.
Happy Spring.

Neala Schwartzberg

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Chicken Lips Licking and Spiced Fruit Salad

February/March in Brazil is Mardi Gras time, although the Brazilians begin to celebrate New Year's Eve, in clubs, or dancing in the streets.

In small towns there were many dancing clubs, and it was the "thing to do" for the families to take the young ones to frolic and dance, get exhausted, go home, and go to bed. On the following two days, do the same thing all over again. It was customary to take along a bag of munchies, consisting of sandwiches, fritters, fruits, cheeses, and sodas.

When my father and I lived in this small town, in Brazil, he took me to dance (and scream) for about 6 hours. It was fun, but today, the innocence of this ritual is lost. It has become more of an adult thing. The clubs are too expensive, and families are not taking the little ones to dance. Most of it is watched on television.

Chicken Lips Licking
Galinha Lamber Os Beicos

My father taught me to prepare this delicious dish to take to the club. I call it Lips Licking because when you eat, you keep licking your lips and fingers. The best part of this dish is, you can make it any time of the year. Make double and refrigerate some to nibble when you feel like having something different. Can be eaten hot or cold. Terrific to take to picnics.

Parents, take your young ones to the market. Choose a package of chicken legs and thighs. Make sure that they are an even color, yellow or white depending on your preference.

8 chicken legs, rinsed and patted dry
8 chicken thighs, rinsed and patted dry
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup mayonnaise (can be lite)
1 cup bread crumbs
1 cup unsweetened, grated coconut
Oil spray, olive or any other vegetable oil
Baking pan

- Parent - Show your child how to rinse the chicken pieces.
- Child - Pat dry the chicken pieces with paper towels. Set the pieces in a container.
- Child - Squeeze the lemon and rub the juice over the chicken pieces.
- Child - Measure the flour, and place it in a plastic bag. Measure the mayonnaise and place in a bowl. Measure the bread crumbs, and coconut and place them together in another plastic bag.
- Parent - Preheat the oven to 350 F.
- Child - Spray a baking pan with the oil.
- Parent and Child - Coat the chicken pieces with the flour. Then, remove the chicken from the bag and place them in the mayonnaise, a few pieces at a time, and cover them evenly.
- Child - Place the coated chicken pieces, a few at a time, in the bread crumb-coconut mixture bag. Shake to cover evenly with the mixture. Arrange coated pieces in the baking pan. If chicken has not previously been frozen, at this point, the pieces may be wrapped well and frozen.
- Parent - Place the baking pan in the oven. Bake for 20 minutes, then turn the pieces over to the other side. Bake for 20 minutes longer, or until pieces are tender.
- Parent - Remove chicken from the oven. Arrange on a platter and serve hot. Or wrap the pieces well and refrigerate.

Spiced Fruit Salad

This recipe has its roots in Arabia and was brought to Brazil by Portuguese setters in the early 1700s.

Take your children to the supermarket and show them the fruits and how to test them for ripeness. Make sure the fruits are not too soft and have no bruises, molds, or mildew. Other fruits can be used in the salad, depending on what is in season in your area.

1 red delicious apple, peeled, cored and sliced into wedges
1 Bosc pear, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced into wedges
1/2 ripe melon, peeled, seeded and cut into wedges
2 navel oranges, peeled, white pith removed, and cut into thin slices
1 pint strawberries, hulled (if too big, cut into halves)
Juice of 1 lime
6 tablespoons honey
2 cups yogurt
1 teaspoon grated orange peel
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamon
1 tablespoon rose water (if available)
1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
1 cup grated toasted coconut

- Parent and child - Rinse the fruits very well and pat them dry with paper towels.
- Child - Squeeze the lime juice. Measure the yogurt, honey, orange peel, cinnamon, cardamon, rose water, white pepper, and coconut.
- Parent - Peel the fruits, rub the apple and pear with the lime juice. Show your child how to hull the stems from the strawberries.
- Parent and child - Arrange the fruits on a platter.
- Child - Combine together in a bowl the honey, yogurt, orange peel, cinnamon, cardamon, rose water, and white pepper. Blend everything well using a wire whisk. Add the coconut and mix well. Pour the mixture over the fruits.

Serve at room temperature.

Enjoy, and think about the drums and dances in the streets of Brazil!

Sandra Allen

Ready,
Set,
Camp!

Now, as we say "farewell" to winter, it is the time to begin looking at summer camps. There are so many different types of camps to choose from that parents may feel overwhelmed. But if you make your choice of camp a step-by-step process it cuts the job of selection down to a more manageable task.

First decide on the kind of camp you would like your child to attend. The options range from half-day and full-day day camps to full-summer sleep-aways. For preschoolers, the best option will probably be a day camp.

The selection process for camp may be easier than you think. Ask friends for recommendations. Many camps are affiliated with licensed daycare centers. Contact your local child care council and ask them for a listing of licensed summer camps in your area. From this list, you can begin to make phone calls. Ask any questions that come to your mind. Talk about how many children are assigned to a counselor. A lower child/counselor ratio will allow your child to receive more individual attention. Ask about the age of the counselors. Ask questions about camp requirements. Some camps require young children to be toilet trained. Does the camp have swimming facilities and, if so, do they require a child to be experienced in the water? Ask about food. Does the camp provide lunches and snacks or will you need to pack a daily lunch for your child? What about transportation? Is there a camp nurse or physician always on the grounds?

After making these calls, some camps will emerge as more appropriate for your particular needs. Once you have selected four or five camps, begin making visits. Some parents call ahead to make an appointment for their visit, others prefer to just "drop in." In any case, once a choice is made, it is a good idea for parents to make two or more unannounced visits. Talk to camp directors and staff and get a "feel" for the camp.

If your child is already in daycare during the year, than the transition to summer camp may be easier. Prepare ahead of time for camp. Have a shopping trip together in which you buy bathing suits, sunscreen, lunch boxes, and other supplies.

If you plan ahead and keep your child involved in the process, summer camp will be memorable and fun for the whole family.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Camp Information

☑ For ACA camp listings: American Camp Assoc. Call 1-800-428-2267; website: www.acacamps.org.
☑ *Summer Camp Answer Book*; This free booklet gives parents information on choosing a camp. Call 1-800-428-2267.
☑ Special Needs Child? Camp info: 212-677-4650.

Something Very Special

Homemade Books to Help Kids Cope: An easy-to-learn technique for parents and professionals by Robert G. Ziegler, M.D.; Magination Press (American Psychological Association); Washington, D.C., 1992; Softcover.

What do you do when your child has nightmares, or is jealous over the new baby? What can you do to help your children deal with their feelings, cope with illness, accept parental divorce. What about going to a new school? Children are always facing challenges and changes, and parents and teachers are always helping them understand and accept.

One way to do this is through stories. This idea isn't new. Libraries and book stores are filled with stories of children confronting the full range of childhood issues. What is unusual (and wonderful) is a book chock full of ideas, illustrations, and examples of how children and their parents can create their own unique and personal storybook.

The book describes the three basic types of books that can be written for and with a child: describing the situation; defining the child's feelings; making a general and empathic statement. These can be about everyday events, or about changes that provoke stress in your child's life.

Ziegler notes that children need repetition to absorb information and learn a new concept. Sometimes there's a specific message parents want to help their children learn. Home-made books can do that. Filled with examples and written in a warm and friendly style, this book is unique, wonderful and very helpful for parents, teachers and anyone involved in the caring of young children.

Whatever situation you and your child face *Homemade Books to Help Kids Cope* helps you create a book your children can go over again and again, absorbing the message in child-sized bites.

Watch for Coming Months . . .

Children's Dreams

Kids and Science

Family Rituals

The Sounds of Language

There is much poetry and love of words in children's books. The sheer enjoyment of playing with language, that's part of writing (and reading) too. Here are some examples:

🕮 ***Hello Toes! Hello Feet!*** by Ann Whitford Paul; illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.95. "Good morning, toes, Good morning, feet, tangled up between my sheets." Playful rhymes full of sounds and actions characterize this exuberant book. Join a little girl as she clumps and clomps, jumps and crunches through her day.

🕮 ***In the Hush of the Evening*** by Nancy Price Graff; illustrated by G. Brian Karas; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. A young boy sees the arrival of night through out the house and nature around him. The writing is lovely and evocative. "At the top of the house where shadows are deep/ past the leaves of the trees/ where the squirrels are asleep/ a little boy waits and listens./ "Purr, purr,"/ snores the tiger cat/ curled on his lap,/ "purr, purr."

🕮 ***My Shadow*** by Robert Louis Stevenson; illustrated by Penny Dale; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA; 1999; Hardcover $12.99. A classic children's poem sweetly illustrated in which a young child wonders about the constant companion, the shadow.

🕮 ***Pots and Pans*** by Patricia Hubbell; pictures by Diane de Groat; HarperFestival; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $9.95. Perfect to read to toddlers. The baby is in the kitchen, getting into the pots and pans and having a wonderful time. Told in rhyme with lots of "sound" words and engaging pictures.

🕮 ***Winter Poems***; selected by Barbara Rogasky; illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman; Scholastic Inc.; New York, 1995; Paperback, $5.95. Traditional poetry around the theme of winter, but without any mention of the winter holidays. The book highlights rhythm and the rhyme across 25 different poets including Shakespeare, Ogden Nash, Richard Wright, Emily Dickinson, and more.

🕮 ***Touch the Poem*** by Arnold Adoff; pictures by Lisa Desimini; The Blue Sky Press (Scholastic, Inc.); New York; 2000; Hardcover, $19.99. These free verse poems celebrate the senses focusing on the small moments. Rubbing the palm of the hand on Daddy's stubble. Watering the plants in the garden. Ice cream cones and fresh peaches. The pictures, and physical arrangement of the words are an important part of the presentation.

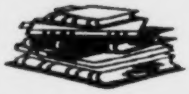
🕮 ***Circle Dogs***; by Kevin Henkes; illustrated by Dan Yaccarino; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. Strong simple illustrations and evocative text carefully laid out on the page make this book intriguing on both levels. "Mama fills their circle bowls. Kibble-clatter, kibble-nibble. Gulp, smack, gone!" It's never dull with the circle dogs.

🕮 ***When the Wind Stops*** by Charlotte Zolotow; illustrated by Stefano Vitale; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1995; Softcover, $4.95. The luminous art and the soft gentle language–of the "sun warm and soft like a sleepy cat resting", and "wind that blows away to make the trees dance somewhere else"– combine to form a lovely story with the message that nothing ever ends but rather is transformed.

For Adults: *Encouraging Kids to Write Poems*

Teaching kindergartners to love writing poetry by Regie Routman; Scholastic; New York, 2000; Softcover, $10.95. Part of a series of books that guide educators (and parents too) in teaching children how to love writing poetry. The book provides an instructional plan including how to get started, sharing kids' poems (including what to notice), demonstrating poetry writing, and how to encourage children to write their own poems. Lots of examples of children's poetry are also included. Why work with kindergartners? It inspires a love of language, careful choice of words, and positively influences other writing. Besides, the children really enjoy it.

Library Resources



Occupations

It's a big world out there filled with people doing all kinds of jobs.

🕮 ***Cowpokes*** by Caroline Stutson; illustrated by Daniel San Souci; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.00. What's it like to be a cowpoke? This cheerful book is filled with flapjacks and rounding up doggies and other cowpoke activities.

🕮 ***Yipee-Yay! A book about cowboys and cowgirls*** by Gail Gibbons; Little Brown & Co.; Boston, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. A fun and factual book about cowfolks in the Old West.

🕮 ***Building*** by Elisha Cooper; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. A deserted lot sits between two buildings, but not for long. The text in this clever book becomes part of the flow of pictures as Cooper describes how buildings grow from empty lots.

🕮 ***Construction Zone*** by Tana Hoban; Tupelo Books; New York, 1999; Boardbook, $6.95. Hoban's photos of all the different machines at a building site: perfect for little ones fascinated by trucks and machinery. Contains a description of what each piece does.

🕮 ***Fireman Small to the Rescue*** by Wong Herbert Yee; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, MA, 1998; Boardbook, $4.95. There's a fire in the barn and the animals are nervous, but Fireman Small saves the day.

🕮 ***Machines At Work*** by Byron Barton; HarperFestival; New York, 1997; Boardbook, $6.95. Off to work go the men and women in these boldly colored pictures depicting a day in the construction trade. They knock down buildings and build them back up. They create roads, and more.

🕮 ***Maybe My Baby*** by Irene O'Book; photos by Paula Hible; Harper Growing Tree; New York, 1998; Boardbook, $5.95. Musing aloud about future jobs but ending with the loving message "I'll love you whoever, however you are."

🕮 ***Mr. Cookie Baker*** by Monica Wellington; Puffin; New York, 1997; Paperback, $4.99. Follow Mr. Cookie Baker as he mixes and decorates and Mrs. Cookie Baker sells his baked goods. Recipe included.

🕮 ***Night City*** by Monica Wellington; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.99. The city never sleeps and this books describes the life that continues after most of the children are tucked into bed. Dancers practice for the evenings performance, and people who work as cleaners "vacuum, sweep, wipe, and polish." When the sun rises these night workers head home.

🕮 ***Sam the Zamboni Man*** by James Stevenson; illustrated by Harvey Stevenson; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. A sweet and charming story perfect for children who love hockey. Matt's grandfather Sam, a former hockey player, now operates the Zamboni machine which scrapes and smooths the ice during the games. When Matt goes to visit not only does he watch his grandfather, he also helps him operate the big machine.

🕮 ***Sargent Hippo's Busy Week***; Wong Herbert Yee; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, MA, 1998; Boardbook, $4.95. What does this police officer do during the week? Tickets cars, directs traffic, catches speeders and more.

🕮 ***Tractor Trouble*** by Steve Augarde; Lodestar Books; New York, 1996; Popup $14.99. A fun book with lots of tabs to pull revealing engine parts, pulling the tractor along, fixing wheels and more. Not for children under three years of age.

🕮 ***Tugboats in Action*** by Captain Timothy R. Burke; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1993; Softcover. Written and photographed by a tug boat captain, the book describes and depicts what tugboats do to help big ships in and out of harbors.

🕮 ***What Do Authors Do?*** by Eileen Christelow Clarion Books; New York, 1995; Softcover, $4.95. A light, but real look at the life of authors through a combination of text and cartoons. Warm, funny and complete.

🕮 ***Who Uses This?*** by Margaret Miller; Mulberry Paperback Book; New York, 1999; Paperback, $5.95. Bright colorful pictures of the tools of the trade followed by the people who use them. Artists and bakers, jugglers and dog walkers. And more.

🕮 ***Whose Hat?*** by Margaret Miller; Mulberry Paperback Book; New York, 1997; Paperback, $4.95. Pictures of the hats associated with different occupations and people, followed on the next page by pictures of the hat and the person in action.

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Como Desarrollar al Escritor en su Niño

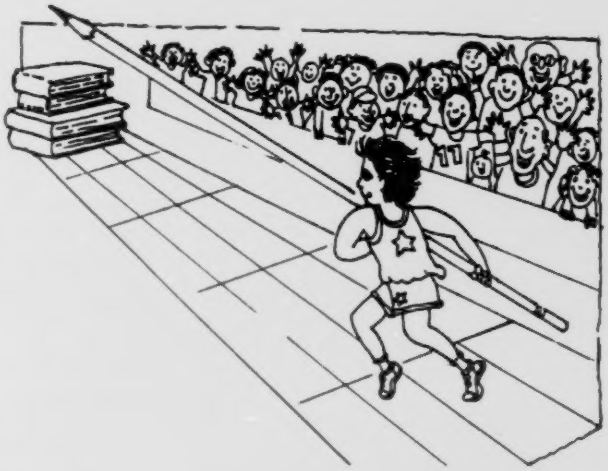
Mientras observaba a mi nieta de cinco años, su boca tensa y llena de determinación, agarrando su lápiz a medida que formaba letras, me sorprendió su progreso desde sus primeros garabatos con un marcador a la edad de dos años. Este entusiasmo con su progreso aun subsiste, a pesar del hecho que mi vida profesional me pone en contacto, cada año, con miles de niños de educación primaria.

Sin embargo, a pesar de mi larga carrera en educación, nada puede compararse a los beneficios derivados de observar, a primera mano, las etapas del desarrollo de los niños de mi propia familia, de "garabatero" a "escritor".

El desarrollo literario de los niños no es solamente asombroso de observar, sino que también demuestra cuanto pueden aprender los niños de escasa edad. Cuando suponemos que un niño no puede escribir, o no puede leer porque no tiene suficiente edad, solo puedo compartir mi experiencia, que prueba lo contrario. Los niños chicos, cuando están expuestos al lenguaje y se les enseña eficazmente, pueden escribir y adquirir un vocabulario mucho más extenso de lo que se puede esperar.

Empezando en kindergarten o incluso en el jardín infantil, los niños creen que pueden escribir. Empiezan con una serie de garabatos, y después le preguntan a un adulto, "¿Qué quiere decir esto"? A pesar de que el niño puede aprender a hablar a muy temprana edad con muy poco esfuerzo, el niño como escritor tiene que aprender habilidades muy especificas para poder transferir lo que quiere decir a lo que quiere escribir.

Desde sus primeros años, los niños están ansiosos de usar implementos de escritura, tal como lápices de cera, marcadores (por supuesto lavables), o incluso un lápiz. A medida que empiezan a comunicarse en papel, los padres quizás debieran familiarizarse sobre donde están sus niños en las distintas etapas de escribir.



Etapas de la Escritura

uEscritura con dibujos: Muchos niños cuentan cuentos con dibujos que han hecho y consideran que esto es su "escritura". uEscritura con garabatos: Una serie de garabatos o líneas pueden significar cualquier cosa para un niño, desde contar un cuento hasta la creación de una lista de compras. u Repetitivo lineal: Esto es un serie de líneas horizontales o verticales en la página que un niño cree que se parece a la escritura de adultos. Es durante esta etapa que un niño posiblemente empieza a distinguir entre dibujos y escritura. Formas y círculos: Los niños copian las letras del alfabeto, generalmente X, T, S, y O. Cuando llegan a esta etapa la mayoría de los niños entienden que están escribiendo y esperan que los adultos "lean" lo que han escrito. u Etapa de deletreo inventado: Los niños a este nivel tienen cierta comprensión de los sonidos que forman las letras. Usan una combinación de letras, o incluso números, como palabras (TV, o Y T V), o algunas relaciones de sonido/simbolos (PIN 8 en vez de Pinocho o R 100), o palabras de memoria visual como, Mamá, Papá, Pare, o incluso McDonald's.

Su niño incluso puede saltarse etapas completas, o demorarse más en pasar de la etapa de garabatos a la de escribir letras. Si su niño no aprende fonéticamente, el o ella quizás no tenga éxito e deletrear con imaginación. Muchos niños se sienten m cómodos memorizando las palabras, y aprendiendo a deletrear del "libro", que intentando armar las palabras con sonidos, y ambos métodos de aprendizaje sirven. Yo siempre he creído que al ofrecerles a los niños un equilibrio educacional, ello siempre buscaran lo que funciona mejor para ellos.

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Una vez que su niño esté escribiendo mas allá de los garabatos, Ud. quizás querrá evaluar su nivel de escritura independiente.

1. Alfabeto (solo letras)
2. Palabra (cualquier palabra reconocible)
3. Grupo de palabras (cualquier frase de dos palabras)
4. Oración (una oración sencilla que hace una pregunta o da información)
5. Cuento con puntuación (dos o más oraciones que mantienen un tema)
6. Cuento de un párrafo (dos o más partes a una secuencia de ideas)

A pesar de que siempre es útil tener esta información, Ud. no debe dejar que los resultados la disuadan de enseñarle a su hijo a crear. Preguntas como "donde empezar" o "a donde ir", son frecuentemente planteadas por padres interesados en alentar a sus hijos a convertirse en escritores más expresivos. Estoy segura que a Ud. frecuentemente le han dicho que los elogios y el alentar a los niños los nutrirá para convertirse en escritores naturales, pero esto no es suficiente. Los niños quieren y necesitan orientación.

JACOB WRITES
HIS FIRST "LETTER" TO GRANDMA

Como Ayudarle a su Hijo a Convertirse en un Escritor Literato

No es suficiente dejar que la escritura sea un proceso de corriente de la conciencia, que producirá contenido pero no estructura. El camino

hacia convertirse en un escritor literato y confiado, mezcla lo mejor de la creatividad con habilidades aprendidas que se convierten en herramientas para toda la vida. Aunque uno no quiere obstaculizar el amor de un niño a escribir, uno puede alentar sutilmente a que usen el diccionario para que descubran la ortografía correcta de una palabra. Si la mala gramática es un problema para los niños de más edad, quizás Ud. quiera jugar un juego para que su hija le diga que suena mejor. Como padres uno puede supervisar la escritura de sus hijos. Dese el tiempo para discutir su progreso con los profesores.

Lea en Voz Alta para que Puedan Leer a una Temprana Edad

A los niños se les lee cuentos desde sus primeros años. Aprenden que este tipo de escritura es distinto que hablar, que los cuentos suenan distintos a las conversaciones cotidianas. Los cuentos tienen palabras como "erase una vez" y "hace muchos años". Llegan a entender que un cuento es una manera especial y organizada de relatar una secuencia de eventos. Al leerle cuentos a su niño chico, usando palabras desconocidas hasta que las conozcan, y al discutir que sucedió primero, segundo, después, y al final, Ud. está sentando las bases para escribir cuentos. De los cuentos leídos en voz alta, Ud. le puede enseñar a su niño chico a escribir demostrando los conceptos de la palabra impresa.

Conceptos de la Palabra Impresa

A medida que Ud. lee libros de la biblioteca o incluso cuentos que sus niños le han dictado, pruebe esta estrategias para ayudarla a familiarizarse con las convenciones de las palabras impresas: Las palabras se escriben de izquierda a derecha. Señale el texto y demuestre que las palabras están escritas de izquierda a derecha en la página.
uLas palabras están compuestas de letras. Demuéstrele a su niño que las letras componen las palabras; empiece con su nombre, los nombres de parientes y otras palabras conocidas. Las oraciones están compuestas de palabras, separadas por espacios. Haga que su hija dicte lo que quiere que se escriba y señale los espacios entre cada palabra: dígale que ponga su dedo entre cada palabra para indicar el espacio que separa las palabras. Se pueden usar signos especiales para darle significado a una oración. A medida que le lee a su niño, mencione el tono o entonación de la oración. Esto sugiere si se debe usar un signo de interrogación o un signo de exclamación, e vez de un punto que solamente sirve para una oración "declaratoria".

Dictado y Escritura Modelada

Los niños pequeños no pueden escribir independientemente, pero gozarán aprendiendo a crea cuentos de escritura dictada Su niño puede hacer un dibujo y crear un cuento sobre lo que ha dibujado. Y que su habilidad de pensar imaginar exceden su habilidad de escribir palabr sobre una hoja de papel, ell le dicta su cuento. Quizás Ud. le puede preguntar, "¿Dime que está pasando e tu cuento"? u otras pregunt para alentar pensamiento creativo y una estructura narrativa. Después, Ud. escribe sus palabras en el papel. Asegúrese de señalar los conceptos de la palabra impresa que fueron discutidos en la sección anterior.

Si su niño es capaz de form letras, pídale que imite lo q Ud. ha escrito debajo de su trabajo. Quizás Ud. tambié quiera intentar la técnica de Lápiz Mágico. Forme las palabras con un marcador amarillo y haga que su hija calque las palabras con un lápiz.

La escritura modelada por padre también es útil. Ud. puede crear un cuento para su niña, escribir una lista pa el supermercado, una carta, unas pocas oraciones descriptivas de su mascota miembro de la familia. Señale todos los conceptos de la palabra impresa a medida que escribe.

La Conexión Escritura/Lectura

Yo siempre he pensado que es importante que los niños tengan amplias oportunidades de escribir, tanto como de leer. Sabemos de investigaciones que los niños que leen no son necesariamente buenos escritores, pero los niños que escriben siempre son buenos lectores. Los niños empiezan a comprender que escribir es sencillamente hablar puesto en papel, editado con signos que indican pare (puntos) o preguntas (signos de interrogación). A estas alturas, los niños se siente incluso más cómodos poniendo sus ideas en papel.

Aliente la alfabetización de su hija demostrando como escribir las palabras que quiere decir. Al guardar estas palabras en una caja, o en un diario de vida, Ud. lo está ayudando a desarrollarse como escritor o lector.

Una estrategia que Ud. puede usar es el Juego de Listado A-Z. Haga que su hijo identifique todas las cosas conocidas en la cocina, en el dormitorio, o en el jardín. Cree una lista A-Z y corte o dibuje una imagen al lado de la palabra. La lista puede estar en un diario de vida especial dividido en secciones sobre Palabras de Animales, Palabras de Cocina, Palabras de Familia, Palabras de Comidas, etc.

Palabras con Poder

También hay palabras que sus hijos usaran a medida que empiezan a escribir y construir oraciones. Estas palabras quizás no serán introducidas como palabras de lectura hasta los cursos de la escuela primaria. Poner estas palabras a la disposición de su niño le permite aumentar su vocabulario.

Las siguientes palabras con poder son ejemplos de una lista: un, y, porqué, puede, podría, hacer, cada, etc. Una vez que Ud. descubra que palabras sus niños quieren usar en sus cuentos, escríbalas en una lista de Palabras con Poder A-Z para que las aprendan y las usen otra vez. A través de los años su niño tendrá muchas oportunidades para coleccionar y almacenar palabras para escribir. Entre más palabras puede recolectar, más grande será su potencial para que ella pueda traspasar este conocimiento a la lectura.

La Importancia de Escribir

A través de su vida, el alfabetismo de su niño será juzgado por la manera que escribe y habla. No obstante que esta es un razón importante para adquirir habilidades de escritura, hay otros aspectos valiosos de las comunicaciones escritas. Los sicólogos y profesores han creído por mucho tiempo que escribir es una catarsis maravillosa para que los niños puedan expresar sus emociones y pensamientos. Además, escribir es una forma de expresión que la sociedad siempre ha apreciado altamente.

Se puede sentir mucha felicidad al observar los maravillosos pensamientos y palabras que su niño escribe en una hoja de papel. Algunos de los momentos más maravillosos de mi vida, como padre y abuelo, han sido cuando me he tomado el tiempo para compartir lo que mis pequeñuelos han escrito a veces incluso sin poder leerlo. Desde las primeras etapas hasta años posteriores cuando tenemos que estar más preocupados con estructura, mecánica, y organización, nosotros desempeñamos un papel muy importante. Nuestra responsabilidad no es ser coauto, sino un público interesado, un maestro paciente, y un editor cariñoso. Ciertamente Ud. experimentara una emoción cuando Ud. sea testigo que su hijo está vinculando el mundo de las palabras al mundo del pensamiento con su lápiz o marcador. Como admirador incondicional de la escritura Ud. debe siempre recordarle a su joven escritor que, "Si puedes pensarlo lo puedes decir, y si lo puedes decir, lo puedes escribir":

Diane Gess, Ed.D. es co-fundadora y Presidente de "The Write Track", un programa de escritura conocido nacionalmente. Ella es una especialista reconocida en desarrollo de personal y diseño curricular. Además, sus publicaciones cubren temas sobre lectura, lenguaje, temas sobre ser padres, y textos de nivel primario hasta universitario.

Mas Actividades de Escritura para Inspirar a los Niños

¿Quiere más ideas para inspirar a los niños a crear y escribir? He aquí algunas sugerencias. Días imposibles. Sugiérale a su niño que escriba sobre un día cuando solo sucedieron cosas imposibles. Por ejemplo: "Mientras mi papá estaba cabalgando en su lápiz un camello entró por la ventana y besó a mi mamá en la mejilla". Entre más imposible mejor. Lo bonito de este tipo de cuento es que invita a los niños a buscar en sus mentes palabras y combinaciones asombrosas. Primeras oraciones. Ayude a su niño a empezar un cuento dándole la primera oración que plantea una situación rara o insólita. Por ejemplo: "El sábado en la mañana me di cuenta que una flor me estaba creciendo en medio de la frente". Esto requiere pensamiento creativo e hilvanado para poder crear un cuento en base de esas ideas. Fotocuentos. Sugiera que los niños busquen en u revista hasta que encuentre una fotografía interesante. Después, dígales que dicten un relato de que pasó antes, durante, y después que se tomó la fotografía. Esta ide también funciona con cuadros y fotografías familiares. Cualquiera sea el tema, el relato ayudará a su hijos a pensar creativa y lógicamente sobre los eventos. Diálogos. Sugiera que su niña escriba (o le dicte) una conversación entre dos objetos relacionados, como un lápi un papel, un tenedor y la carne, sus propios pies y vereda. ¿Qué se sentiría ser pies? La creación de diálogo ayuda a los niños a pensar sobre las maneras en que los objetos y las ideas están vinculadas.

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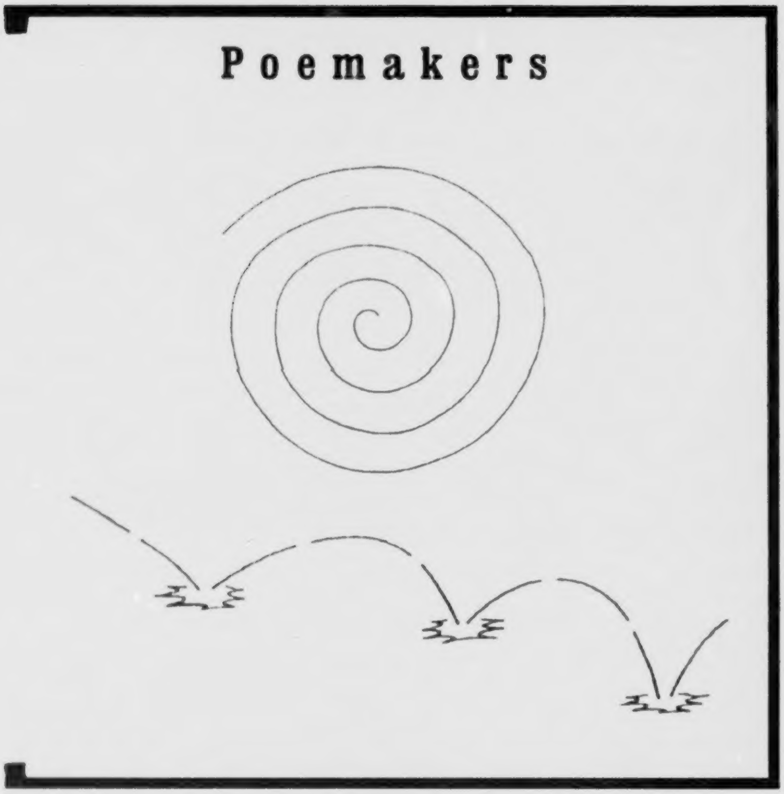
Poemakers

David Morice es el creador de Poemakers? hojas de papel blanco con dibujos especiales pre-impresos. Como parte de su diseño estas inventivas formas tienen líneas en blanco donde se pueden escribir palabras para crear una fusión de palabras y formas. "Los dibujos y las líneas en blanco son un punto de partida para escribir", escribe el Sr. Morice.

Hemos reproducido uno de los poemakers del Sr. Morice más abajo y hemos adaptado otro, simplificándolo para que sea usado por niños más jóvenes. Ud. y su hijo pueden, evidentemente, inventar sus propios poemakers y de esta manera duplicar la entretención y creatividad.

Dave Morice enseñó Literatura Infantil en la Universidad de Iowa durante siete años. También tiene un libro publicado por Teachers and Writers Inc., Titulado "The Adventures of Dr. Alphabet; 104 Unusual Ways to Write Poetry in the Classroom and the Community".

Para más información sobre poemakers: Poemakers, por Dave Morice, Teachers and Writers Magazine, November-December 1999. Una publicación de Teachers and Writers Collaborative.



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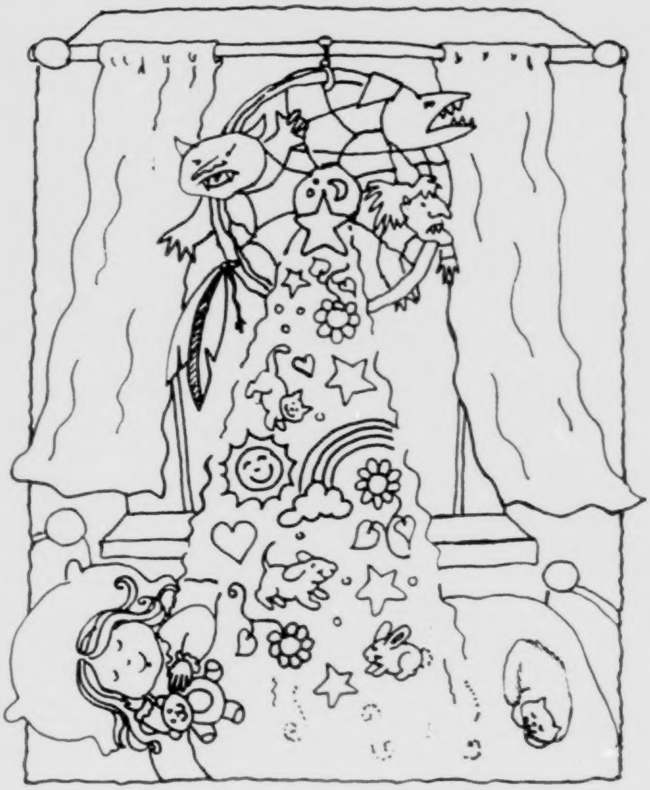
When Your Child Dreams



Most parents receive their introduction to the world of children's dreaming with a jarring, middle-of-the-night cry for help–"Mommy, daddy! I had a bad dream! A big wolf was chasing me, and he tried to eat me!"

Trying to help a child who's just had a nightmare is an experience almost all parents have at some time or other. The most immediate task is to comfort your child and soothe the fears. A common way parents try to do this is by saying, "It's all right, dear, the wolf wasn't real, it was just a dream..."

That, in my experience as both a parent and a dream researcher, is precisely the wrong thing to say. It's wrong because it ignores the reality of your child's feelings: your child may not be sure what the dream wolf was or where it came from, but your child definitely knows that the feelings of fear are real. If you don't acknowledge the strength of those feelings, if you try to dismiss the nightmare as nothing but nonsense, that leaves your child not only frightened but isolated, too. When parents say, "It was just a dream," a child can only conclude, "Mommy and dad don't get it, they don't understand... Now what will I do if the wolf comes back?"

So, take your children's dreams seriously – everything else follows from that. If you treat these dreams as meaningful experiences, not only will you give more effective comfort during those middle-of-the-night awakenings, you will also provide your child with a powerful means of developing a stronger, healthier, and more creative imagination.

Why Do Children's Dreams Matter?

Most children begin talking about their dreams around the age of two or three (about the time they begin talking in general). Nightmares are very common in children of this age. Indeed, preschool children have a higher percentage of frightening dreams than any other age group. Bad dreams seem to be a normal, natural part of growing up.

There's a good reason for this. The basic psychological function of dreaming is to help people make sense of their experiences. Researchers have demonstrated that when people face things in their daily lives that are new, challenging, and/or frightening, they dream about those things at night. Dreams function to process those experiences and incorporate them into people's ongoing sense of themselves, helping their minds stay balanced, flexible, and alert.

For young children, of course, every single day brings experiences that are new, challenging, and/or frightening. Those experiences frequently feel completely overwhelming. It might sound strange, but nightmares have the function of helping

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children process all the mentally and physically demanding experiences that come with each day of their young lives.

Children's dreams express their hopes and fears, their joys and frustrations, their deepest worries and greatest potentials. Paying careful attention to dreams is an ideal way for parents to gain a better understanding of their children's day-to-day emotional life.

Dreaming of Ants

One of the first dreams my oldest child, Dylan, told me was a dream about ants. Dylan was about three-and-a-half at the time, and he woke up one morning and said, in a kind of puzzled tone, "There were ants on my books, and all over my bookcase." We laughed a little about it, and he showed me where, in his dream, the ants had been crawling. He wasn't scared by the dream so much as concerned by it. The ants had really been there, and more than anything he simply wanted me to know that.

Dylan and I didn't use any elaborate techniques to interpret his dream. We just playfully talked about it for a few moments while he was getting dressed. But in that brief conversation he managed to communicate some very strong and complex emotions. The day before, I had found a sudden infestation of ants in our kitchen, something which always makes me extremely angry. Dylan had watched me as I stormed into the garage, grabbed the insecticide, stormed back into the kitchen and sprayed the poison on the ants, killing them all. I wasn't aware of it--I was too caught up in my own anger--but this whole episode had made a big impression on Dylan. In his dream that night he imagined what it would be like if the ants came into his room, into his special space, and invaded the bookshelf next to his bed.

When Dylan told me his dream I realized he was probably worried not only by the ants, but also by my strong emotional reaction to them. Thanks to this insight, I made sure to explain to him (calmly) why ants can't come in the house. I also made sure to ask myself why the ants had set me off in the first place, and I reflected more generally on how my emotions can have an unexpectedly strong impact on my children.

The Symbolic and Metaphorical Language of Dreams

Not all dreams are this clear. Sometimes dreams speak in a language of symbol and metaphor, a language which can appear silly and irrational. This is why so many people think dreams are nothing but nonsense. But the language of dreaming is actually the natural language of emotion and imagination--and it has always been used in myths, fairy tales, and creative art.

To understand this language requires no special training. All that's needed is patience, intuition, and an open mind. For parents interested in understanding their children's dreams, the best attitude is one of playfulness. Look at the dreams as a natural, spontaneous kind of imaginative play. This attitude opens up several possibilities for discussing with your children the possible meanings of their dreams.

Suppose your daughter just told you she dreamed of being chased by a wolf. She may be upset, frightened, or just curious about her dream. Here are some ways the two of you could explore the dream and its meanings.

➢ **Explore the images**: Talk with your child about the characters, objects, and settings in her dream. ("Can you tell me more about what the wolf looked like? Was there anyone else around?")

➢ **Explore the emotions**: Reflect on the feelings that came up in the dream. ("It sounds like you were pretty scared. Was your heart thumping really fast?")

➢ **Explore its connection to other dreams**: Discuss any connections this dream might have to your child's other dreams. ("A couple of weeks ago I remember you had a dream about being chased by a vampire. Was this dream like that one?")

➢ **Explore its connection to other stories**: Discuss any connections the dream might have to stories your child knows. ("Do you remember '*The Three Little Pigs*'? Do you think the big bad wolf is like the wolf in your dream?")

➢ **Explore different endings**: Finally, ask your child if she can imagine different ways the dream could end. ("How do you think you could get away from the wolf, or make him stop chasing you? If you have the dream again, what could you do differently?")

Night Terrors ...

Night terrors are not dreams at all, but a generally harmless sleep disorder which is very common in childhood. They usually occur in the first hour or two of sleep, and the child may scream, thrash about, and be very hard to awaken. When the child does wake up, he or she often remembers nothing of the experience, and wonders what all the fuss is about. Although night terrors are extremely upsetting to parents, who may feel panic-stricken at the sight of their children in such a state, they are not in most cases indications of any mental or physical problem. However, if your child experiences especially frequent night terrors, you should consult your pediatrician. ***Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D.***

Dreams Can Stimulate Creativity

There are many other playful dream activities that parents and children can share, such as drawing or painting pictures of dreams, making up little skits using dolls or action figures as characters, writing the dreams out as stories, and keeping family dream journals. But the most valuable activity, and the easiest one, is simply talking about dreams–just a little bit here and there, at the breakfast table, or driving in the car, or while getting ready for bed. By making these kinds of playful discussions an ongoing, natural part of family life, parents can give an invaluable boost to their children's budding powers of creative imagination.

Common Themes in Children's Dreams

Every dream is the unique personal creation of the dreamer's imagination. The images, feelings, and sensations of each dream always emerge out of the context of the individual's life. Because of this, the same dream image can have different meanings for different people. For example, a dream of the ocean might mean one thing to a person living at the beach, another to a person who's father died in a boating accident. There is no automatic, "one size fits all" meaning for any dream. It always depends on the unique details of the dreamer's personal life.

However, researchers have found that children's dreams regularly contain a handful of common themes which reveal especially important feelings and concerns. My advice to parents is to look at these typical dreams as special opportunities to reflect with their children on what's going on in their lives. Here are some examples:

✦ *Being threatened by animals or monsters.* These are very common characters in children's dreams, symbolizing many possible things: adults (such as the child's parents), other children, aspects of the child's own personality, and actual house pets and animals from waking life. If a child dreams of being chased by an animal or monster, it's worth asking if anything in waking life is making the child feel scared or anxious.

✦ *Flying.* Flying dreams are generally happy, exuberant experiences, and many children call them their favorite kind of dream. The basic meaning of flying dreams tends to be the revelation of new powers and freedom–the child has the experience of doing something "impossible," and this can powerfully stimulate an attitude of hope and optimism toward the future.

✦ *Falling.* In contrast to flying dreams, dreams of falling are usually frightening experiences which symbolize a child's fear of losing connection with important people and/or places (e.g., the birth of a new sibling, moving to a new house, parents getting a divorce).

✦ *Being paralyzed or trapped.* Young children are acutely aware of how small they are in relation to adults, and their dreams often symbolize this feeling with images and sensations of being caught, kidnapped, imprisoned, stuck, unable to move, etc.

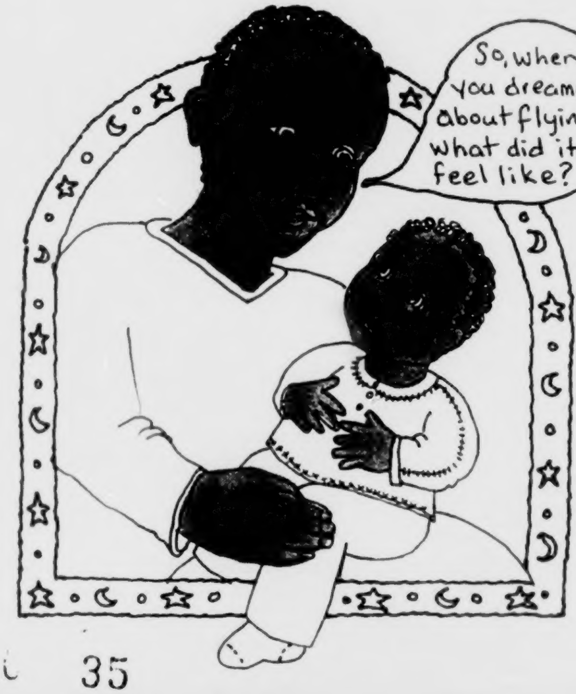
✦ *Appearing exposed or naked in public.* As children get older they become increasingly sensitive to how other people see them, and they sometimes feel painfully vulnerable to the attitudes and opinions of others. A child's dream of being exposed in public can symbolically express that worry. Parents should take such a dreams as an opportunity to talk with their children about how they're feeling toward their friends, schoolmates, and family members.

✦ *Being tested or examined.* In a society where children are subjected at a very young age to a variety of rules, schedules and behavioral requirements, it's inevitable that those experiences would become a part of their dream lives, too. When a child has a particularly upsetting "exam dream" it could be an indication that the external pressures on the child, either at home or at school, are becoming too much to bear.

Parents' Dreams About Their Children

Being a parent is an amazing experience. Nothing in the world is more wonderful, more frustrating, more exciting, and more difficult than raising a child. Your feelings about this will frequently appear in your own dreams. These dreams can be very helpful in guiding you through the never-ending challenges of family life.

For example, your dreams may relate


So, when you dreamed about flying, what did it feel like?

directly to a particular issue in the family or express feelings about the parenting roles being played by your spouse or partner, teachers, and other caregivers. Your dreams may harken back to your own experiences as a child, relating past experiences of being parented to your present experiences. You can use the same techniques to explore the meaning of your own dreams that you use to explore the meaning of your child's dreams.

One last practical suggestion I would make is to consider sharing your dreams with your children and allowing them to ask questions and make comments–you may be surprised at the insightful things your children will say. Such family dream-sharing can help parents and their children develop an ever-deeper sensitivity to each other's emotional worlds.

Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D., is co-author with Alan Siegel of "Dreamcatching: Every Parent's Guide to Understanding and Exploring Children's Dreams and Nightmares" (Three Rivers, 1998) and author of "Transforming Dreams: Learning Spiritual Lessons from the Dreams You Never Forget" (John Wiley & Sons, 2000).

Sleep & Dreams

Frequently Asked Questions

➲ How much sleep does my child need?

That really depends on the age of the child. Generally babies get the amount of sleep they need because they'll simply fall asleep if they get tired. But they don't sleep like adults. Newborns sleep for a few hours, wake up, eat and then go back to sleep. They usually get between 16-18 hours sleep over a 24 hour period, although each child is different. After a few months, sleep patterns begin to change and baby starts to sleep for longer stretches of time, and, hopefully, sleeps longer at night.

Gradually your child will begin to take two naps during the day, about 3 or 4 hours, and sleep longer at night. By toddlerhood your child will generally sleep a total of about 10-13 hours of sleep in 24 hours.

It isn't until around the preschool years that children can get less sleep than they actually need, generally, about 10-12 hours a night. What can cause a problem? Waking a child up early for preschool while letting her stay up at night, perhaps to spend time with a parent who comes home late.

➲ Sometimes my child wakes up at the slightest noise, other times she'll sleep through a thunder storm. Why is that?

Although we often think that sleep is a uniform condition, the same throughout the night, in fact, there are different levels and different kinds of sleep. Scientists talk about REM and nonREM sleep.

REM sleep, which stands for Rapid Eye Movement, is the kind of sleep we associate with dreams. It is named after one of the major characteristics of "dream" sleep, the rapid eye movements of the sleeper. If you watch your child at night and see her eyes moving back and forth under her eyelids, she's probably in REM sleep. Scientists have found that people (children as well as adults) awakened when showing these distinctive movements usually report having a dream.

NonREM sleep is a different kind of sleep and it is composed of four stages or depths of sleep. Stage I is a brief transition between wakefulness and sleep. A person in Stage I sleep is easily awakened and often reports only "daydreaming" rather than sleeping. Stage II is considered a light sleep and children can be easily aroused during this stage. Stages III and IV are deeper states characterized by slow brain waves and regular slow breathing and heartbeat. It's harder to wake the sleeper in these stages.

➲ Why do we have REM sleep? Why do we dream?

Actually we know very little about dreams. We do know that REM sleep is important, but not exactly why or how. Some experts believe that what we experience as dreams are just the random firings of brain cells. But others assert that dreams have meaning and reflect events and experiences that are important to us. Research suggests that dreams even help us process information. We do know that we all dream, even if we don't remember our dreams the next morning.

➲ My child sometimes walks or talks in his sleep. What's that?

They are called partial arousals. It is as if your youngster is awakening from a deep stage of sleep into wakefulness, but doesn't quite make it all the way. It has been compared to an elevator getting stuck between two floors. These youngsters aren't awake, but they aren't asleep either.

Night terrors (See box) are one kind of partial arousal, but sleep walking and sleep talking are other forms. Although it looks as if the child is acting out his dreams, he isn't. This isn't REM sleep. In fact, during REM sleep our body is actually paralyzed to prevent us from hurting ourselves.

These partial arousals rarely reflect any kind of underlying problem, but sleep walkers can hurt themselves. Because they are sleeping rather than being fully awake, they may inadvertently trip over furniture, fall down stairs, etc.

If you have questions about your youngster's behavior, or are at all concerned about his safety, discuss the situation with your child's pediatrician.

● Want more information on children's sleep and dreams? One comprehensive but reader friendly book is published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. It covers all the questions you have about your child's sleep and dreams, and probably some questions you haven't thought of yet.

***Guide to Your Child's Sleep: Birth through Adolescence*,**
George J. Cohen, MD,
FAAP (Editor-in-chief),
Villard Press, New York
1999; Softcover, $12.95.

THE HEALTH CORNER

Tooth Problems:
Children at Risk

In the past, children developed cavities. It was almost normal for youngsters to come back from dental check-ups and compare the number of teeth they had drilled and filled. But today the situation has changed. Cavities are not a routine part of growing up for all children. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), 20% of US children have 80% of the cavities.

Who are these children?

Some are youngsters who have recently immigrated to the United States and hadn't received regular dental care. Others may live in an area without fluoridated water. Although fluoridation is the Number 1 way to prevent tooth decay, 40-50% percent of children do not have access to fluoridated water.

Youngsters with special health needs are also at risk for tooth and gum problems. For example, developmentally disabled persons may develop moderate or severe gum disease. Why? Many parents have difficulty finding dental care for their children with disabilities. It's also hard for parents to provide routine home dental care. Pediatric dentists can provide both specialized care as well as offer suggestions to help parents help their children.

Finally, children who haven't had a dental visit for more than two years are also at risk for developing problems.

Why are healthy teeth important?

Children with healthy mouths have a better chance of good general health. They can chew more easily and gain more nutrients from the foods they eat. A healthy mouth is more attractive, giving children confidence in their appearance.

Unfortunately, income seems to be a factor in dental care. Children from families with smaller incomes are more likely to suffer tooth decay. Why? Not everyone can afford dental care. However, many communities have programs that offer free or reduced-fee dental care to children. These may be found in clinics, public programs, and in dental schools and children's hospitals.

How can Parents Protect Children's Teeth?

Seek dental care early and often. The AAPD recommends a visit to a pediatric dentist by a child's first birthday.

Brush and floss. Flossing once a day, and brushing after breakfast and before bed with a fluoride toothpaste along with eating a balanced diet can help every child have better dental health.

Use sealants. Sealants are invisible protectors of teeth most at risk for decay. Children with sealants have 50 percent less tooth decay than children without sealants. Sealants are painted on the teeth and then allowed to harden. Made of clear or shaded plastic, they protect the chewing surfaces of back teeth. Even if a child brushes and flosses carefully, it is almost impossible to clean the deep hills and valleys on these teeth. Food and bacteria build up in these tiny grooves and pits, placing a child in danger of tooth decay. Sealants seal out food and plaque. So, the sooner the sealant is applied, the better.

Make sure your child gets the right amount of fluoride. Half of American children under the age of 12 have never had a cavity. Much of the success of this "cavity-free generation" is due to effective use of fluorides. Even though babies don't have teeth, they still need fluoride. They have two full sets of teeth invisible but developing under the gums. Children aged six months to 16 years may need fluoride supplements if they drink water that is not optimally fluoridated. Sources of fluoride are fluoride drops in combination with prescription vitamins for infants, and young children as well as fluoride toothpastes, mouth rinses and fluoride applications.

However, it is possible for a child to get too much fluoride and develop enamel fluorosis (or white spots and streaks). The appropriate amount of fluoride depends on a child's size and weight.

Be aware that children around the age of two are very susceptible to problems caused by swallowing fluoride toothpaste. Because young children tend to swallow, not spit, when they brush, parents should supervise their preschooler's tooth brushing. Use a small pea-sized amount of toothpaste and discourage your child from swallowing toothpaste.

Adapted with permission from information provided by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; 211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 700 Chicago, ILL 60611; phone 312-337-2169; www.aapd.org

Dear Reader

Ah, dreams, They have fascinated humankind from the beginning. Dreams can reflect our fears, offer solutions to our problems, entertain us, and sometimes confuse and frighten us. I've had wonderful dreams of flying through the air, and terrifying dreams of my car speeding down a hill while I fruitlessly applied the brakes. I've revisited some of the joyful moments of my life, and some of the most sad.

Whether we remember them or not, we dream every night, and so do our children. They too have dreams that delight, terrify and amaze. The next morning they often report on their sleepy time adventures, or their misadventures. So, this month Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D. a veteran researcher, psychologist, dreamer, and parent, shares with us his knowledge and experience.

What looks like a dream but isn't? Read up on Night Terrors as well as our Frequently Asked Questions about children's sleep and dreams. And remember to check out the Library Resources for a bedtime round-up.

It's been a while since the Health Corner talked about teeth, so this month, read and learn about dental health for your child.

Happy dreaming.

Neala Schwartzberg

Library Resources

Sleep & Dream

📖 ***Before I Go to Sleep*** by Thomas Hood; illustrated by Maryjane Begin; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. A sweet story told in rhyme with luminous and whimsical illustrations about a young boy amusing himself on a hot summer night.

♪ ***Counting Sheep*** by Collin Raye; Sony Wonder; CD/$16.98; Cassette $9.94. Part of the Sony Wonder Family Artist series this is a warm and lovely collection of songs perfect for children. The songs range from funny (*Counting Sheep* about a little child who is trying to count sheep to become sleepy) to the classic *When You Wish Upon A Star.*

📖 ***Goodnight*** by Jan Pienkowski; paper engineering by Helen Blamer and Martin Taylor; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Popup, $14.99. A young child has many reasons why he can't go to bed, from bears under the stairs to bugs on the rug. The answer? After all the tabs are pulled and the popups popped, they all get into bed and go to sleep.

📖 ***Hide and Sleep*** by Melanie Walsh; DK Publishing; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $9.95. A young child doesn't want to go to sleep and tries several places to hide. But none of them really work. The only place roomy enough and comfortable enough is–bed.

📖 ***How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?*** by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague; The Blue Sky Press (Scholastic Inc.); New York, 2000; Hardcover, $15.95. A classic case of "good dinosaur, bad dinosaur" as the book answers the title question with all kinds of ill-mannered dinosaurs. But, in fact, dinosaurs don't badly at all. Instead, they give kisses, turn out the light, tuck in their tails and whisper "Good night!"

📖 ***I Hate to Go to Bed*** by Katie Davis; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA; 1999; Hardcover, $14.00. What do parents do after a child goes off to bed? One little girl is convinced that's when the party starts. She devises many ways to sneak out of bed but her parents are never having any fun. So she decides to have her own party in her dreams.

📖 ***Jessica and the Wolf*** by Ted Lobby; illustrated by Tennessee Dixon; Magination Press (American Psychological Association); Washington DC, 1990; Softcover. Simply illustrated with black and white drawings, the heart of the book is how Jessica's parents handle her nightmare. The *Introduction for Parents* helps explain children's nightmares and how parents can help.

📖 ***Mad Summer Night's Dream*** by Ruth Brown; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.99. Has your child ever had a very strange dream? In this story a young girl has a topsy-turvy dream world filled with snow falling in the middle of summer and other impossibilities.

📖 ***The Monster Bed*** by Jeanne Willis and Susan Varley; Mulberry Paperback; New York, 1999; Softcover, $4.95. Being afraid of monsters under the bed is fine for humans, but what do the monsters fear? Humans under the bed. A clever reversal of the monster fears of children.

📖 ***Sleep is for Everyone*** by Paul Showers; illustrated by Wendy Watson; HarperCollins; New York, 1997; Hardcover. A simple but fascinating look at sleep. The text combines facts about the way animals sleep with questions about the way the child-reader sleeps. It moves on to talk about the way babies and young children sleep and why sleep is important. This is one of the *Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science Books* for children ages 3 to 6, and adults will find it interesting

📖 ***Tell Me Something Happy Before I Go to Sleep*** by Joyce Dunbar, Debi Gliori; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. Willa is a little bunny who is afraid of bad dreams, so her big brother Willoughby helps her think of happy thoughts and helps her fall asleep.

📖 ***The Very Noisy Night*** by Diana Hendry; illustrated by Jane Chapman; Dutton Children's Books; New York; Hardcover, $15.99. Little Mouse can't sleep. Strange and scary noises keep him awake. He wakes up Big Mouse. Big Mouse patiently makes sure everything is safe. The illustrations add another dimension to the story with their inclusion of everyday objects into the world of mice. Spools empty of thread become night stands, old stamps become pictures on the wall. See what you can find.

Resources ◆ ◆ The Health Corner

📖 ***I Know Why I Brush My Teeth*** by Kate Rowan; illustrated by Katharine McEwen; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover, $9.99. In addition to the message about the importance of brushing teeth and how to brush teeth, this book includes information on baby teeth and the adult teeth that eventually replace them.

📖 ***I'm Going to the Dentist*** illustrated by Maxie Chambliss; Ladybird (Penguin USA); New York, 1997; Pop-up, $7.99. Shows children what it's like to go to the dentist. Pop-ups add to the friendly low-key feel of the book. Also available is ***I'm Going to the Doctor.***

📖 ***Those Icky Sticky Smelly Cavity-Causing but Invisible Germs*** by Judith Anne Rice; illustrated by Julie Ann Stricklin; Redleaf Press; St. Paul, MN, 1997; Softcover. Although the tone is light, this book in English and Spanish makes the point that what we eat causes germs that give us cavities. The story follows Sal through his day of eating and brushing his teeth, ending with his visit to the dentist to have his teeth professionally cleaned.

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P A R E N T   A N D   P R E S C H O O L E R

NEWSLETTER

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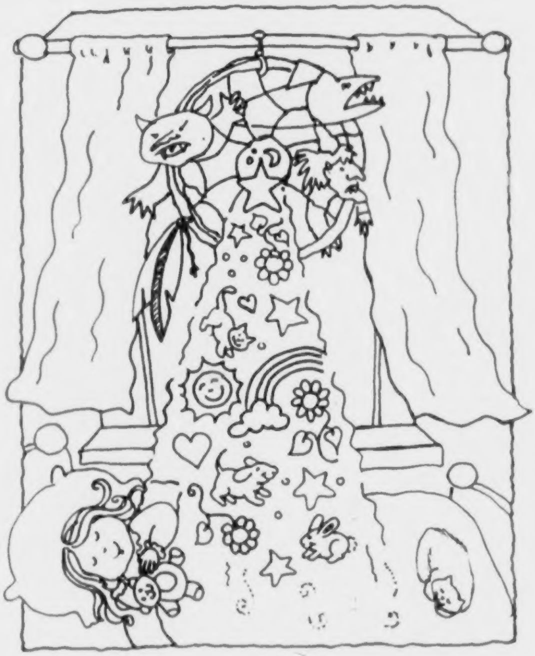
Cuando su Niño Sueña

La mayoría de los padres reciben su introducción al mundo de los sueños infantiles con estrepitosos gritos pidiendo ayuda a altas horas de la noche: ¡"Mami, Papi! ¡Tuve un sueno malo! ¡Un lobo inmenso me estaba persiguiendo y trato de comerme"!

Tratar de ayudar a un niño que acaba de tener una pesadilla es una experiencia que casi todos los padres han tenido en algún momento u otro. La primera tarea es reconfortar a su niño y aliviar sus temores. Una manera común de los padres para hacer esto es decir: "Todo esta bien hijito, el lobo no es de verdad, solo fue un sueño"...

Eso, en mi experiencia como madre e investigadora de sueños, es precisamente lo que no se debe decir. Es una equivocación porque ignora la realidad de los sentimientos de su niño: su hijo puede no estar seguro que fue el sueño del lobo o de donde provino, pero su hijo sabe indiscutiblemente que los sentimientos de terror son reales. Si Ud. no reconoce la fuerza de esos sentimientos, si Ud. trata de descartar la pesadilla como una tontera, eso deja a su niño no solamente asustado, sino que también aislado. Cuando los padres dicen, "Fue solamente un sueño", el niño solo puede llegar a la conclusión que "La mami y el papi no entienden, no comprenden... ¿Que voy a hacer si el lobo vuelve"?

Por lo tanto, tome en serio los sueños de sus hijos, todo lo demás depende de eso. Si Ud. trata estos sueños como experiencias importantes, Ud. no solo podrá ser más eficaz en reconfortar a su hijo durante estos episodios a altas horas de la noche, sino que también le dará a su niño los medios para desarrollar una imaginación más fuerte, saludable y creativa.



Por Que Importan los Sueños de los Niños

La mayoría de los niños empiezan a hablar sobre sus sueños alrededor de los dos o tres años (en general, más o menos a la misma edad que empiezan a hablar). De hecho, los niños preescolares tienen un porcentaje más alto de sueños aterradores que cualquier otro grupo. Las pesadillas parecen ser una parte normal y natural del desarrollo.

Hay buenas razones para esto. La función sicológica básica de los sueños es ayudarle a la gente a dilucidar sus experiencias. Los investigadores han demostrado que cuando la gente enfrenta cosas nuevas, desafiantes y/o aterradoras en sus vidas cotidianas, esa gente sueña sobre esas cosas en la noche. Los función de los sueños es procesar esas experiencias e incorporarlas a la idea que la gente tiene de si mismas, ayudando a sus mentes a mantenerse equilibradas, flexibles, y alertas.

Evidentemente, para los niños de escasa edad, todos los días traen experiencias nuevas, desafiantes y/o aterradoras. Estas experiencias parecieran ser completamente abrumadoras. Puede parecer insólito, pero las pesadillas tienen la función de ayudar a los niños a procesar mental y físicamente todas las difíciles experiencias que se presentan a diario en sus jóvenes vidas.

Los sueños de los niños expresan sus esperanzas y temores, sus dichas y frustraciones, sus preocupaciones más profundas y sus más grandes potenciales. Prestarle cuidadosa atención a los sueños es una manera ideal para los que padres tengan una mejor comprensión de la vida emocional cotidiana de sus niños.

Soñando con Hormigas

Uno de los primeros sueños que mi hijo mayor, Dylan, me contó, fue un sueño sobre hormigas. En ese entonces Dylan tenía alrededor de tres años y medio y despertó en la mañana y me dijo en un tono extrañado, "Habían hormigas en mis libros y estaban en todo mi estante". Nos reímos un poco, y me mostró donde en su sueño habían estado las hormigas. No estaba asustado del sueño sino preocupado. Las hormigas realmente habían estado ahí, y más que cualquier otra cosa él quería que yo lo supiera.

Dylan y yo no usamos técnicas complejas para interpretar su sueño. Solo conversamos alegremente por unos minutos mientras se vestía. Pero en esa breve conversación se las arregló para comunicarme algunas emociones muy fuertes y complejas. El día anterior, yo había encontrado una plaga de hormigas en nuestra cocina, algo que siempre me enfada mucho. Dylan me observó cuando yo corrí al garaje, agarre el insecticida, y volví rápidamente a la cocina y rocié el veneno sobre las hormigas, matándolas a todas. No me di cuenta --estaba demasiado ensimismada en mi propia rabia– pero este episodio había impresionado mucho a Dylan. En su sueño esa noche se imaginó como sería si las hormigas hubieran entrado a su pieza, a su propio espacio, e invadido el estante al lado de su cama.

Cuando Dylan me contó su sueño me di cuenta que estaba preocupado no solo sobre las hormigas, sino que también de mi fuerte reacción a ellas. Gracias a esta intuición, me aseguré de explicarle (con calma) por qué las hormigas no pueden entrar a la casa. También me aseguré de preguntarme a mi misma porqué las hormigas me habían causado una reacción tan desproporcionada, y reflexione en términos más generales sobre cómo mis emociones pueden tener un impacto tan fuerte sobre mis hijos.

El Lenguaje Simbólico y Metafórico de los Sueños

No todos los sueños son tan claros. A veces los sueños hablan en un idioma de símbolos y metáforas, un lenguaje que puede parecer necio e irracional. Por eso muchas personas creen que los sueños son simplemente necedades. Sin embargo, el lenguaje de los sueños es, en realidad, el lenguaje natural de las emociones y de la imaginación y siempre ha sido usado en los mitos, en cuentos de hadas, y en el arte creativo.

Para comprender este lenguaje no se necesita una capacitación especial. Lo único que se necesita es paciencia, intuición, y una mente tolerante. Para los padres que están interesados en comprender los sueños de sus niños, la mejor actitud es ser lúdico o juguetón. Interprete los sueños como un tipo de juego natural y espontaneo. Esta actitud abre la puerta a varias posibilidades de discutir con sus niños el posible significado de sus sueños.

Supongamos que su hija le acaba de decir que soñó que un lobo la estaba persiguiendo. Puede estar afligida, asustada, o sencillamente sentirse curiosa sobre el sueño. Las siguientes son algunas maneras en que ambas pueden pueden explorar el sueño y su significado.

Explore las imágenes: Converse con su hija sobre los personajes, objetos, y el entorno de su sueño. (¿"Me puedes contar más sobre como era el lobo? ¿Había más gente"?)

Explore las emociones: Reflexione sobre los sentimientos que surgieron en el sueño. ("Pareciera que estuviste muy asustada. ¿Tu corazón estaba latiendo rápido"?)

Explore su relación con otros sueños: Discuta cualquiera relación que este sueño puede tener con otros sueños de su hija. ("Hace un par de semanas, recuerdo que tuviste un sueño en que te perseguía un vampiro. ¿Este sueño era parecido a ese"?)

Explore su relación a otros cuentos: Discuta cualquier vinculo que el sueño puede tener con cuentos que sabe su hija. (¿"Recuerdas "Los Tres Cerditos"? ¿Crees que el lobo malo es como el lobo en tu sueño"?)

Explore distintos finales: Finalmente, pregúntele a su hija si se puede imaginar distintas maneras en que pudiera terminar el sueño. (¿"Cómo crees que te podrías arrancar del lobo, o hacerlo dejar que te persiga"? ¿Si tuvieras el sueño otra vez, que harías distinto"?)

Los Sueños Pueden Estimular la Creatividad

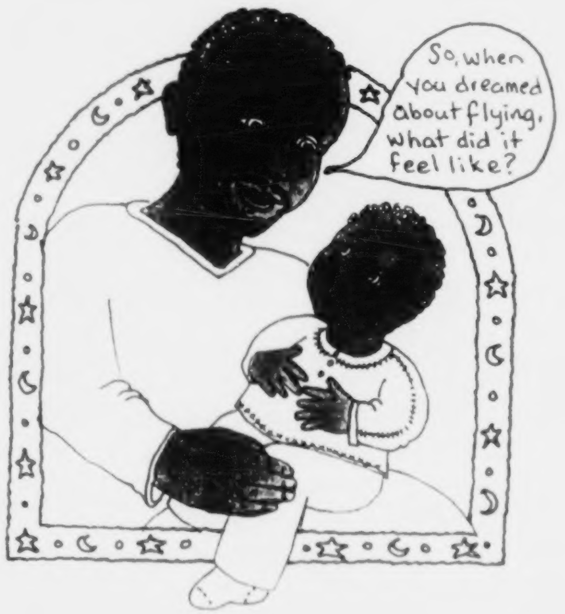
Hay muchas actividades lúdicas que los padres y los niños pueden compartir, como dibujar y pintar cuadros de los sueños, usando pequeñas representaciones cómicas, usando muñecas o figuras de acción como personajes, escribir los sueños como si fueran cuentos, y manteniendo un diario familiar de sueños. Sin embargo, la actividad más valiosa, y la más fácil, es simplemente conversar sobre los sueños –de a poco, en la mesa durante el desayuno, o durante un viaje en automóvil, o durante la preparación para la cama. Al hacer estas conversaciones juguetonas una parte constante y natural de la vida familiar esto puede ser un aliento para los incipientes poderes creativos de la imaginación de los niños.

Temas Comunes en los Sueños de los Niños

Cada sueño es la creación personal única de la imaginación del que sueña. Las imágenes, sentimientos, y sensaciones de cada sueño siempre emergen del contexto de la vida de la persona. Debido a esto, la misma imagen del sueño puede tener distintos significados para distintas personas. Por ejemplo, un sueño sobre el mar puede significar una cosa para una persona que vive en la playa y otra cosa para una persona cuyo padre falleció en un accidente marítimo. No hay un significado general para un sueño. Siempre depende de los detalles específicos de la vida personal de la persona que los soñó.

Sin embargo, los investigadores han descubierto que los sueños de los niños habitualmente contienen algunos temas comunes que revelan sentimientos y preocupaciones especialmente importantes. Mi consejo a los padres es que examinen estos sueños típicos como oportunidades especiales para reflexionar con sus hijos sobre que está pasando en sus vidas. He aquí algunos ejemplos:

*_Ser amenazados por animales y monstruos._ Estos son personajes muy comunes en sueños de niños, que pueden simbolizar muchas cosas: adultos (como los padres del niño), otros niños, otros aspectos de la propia personalidad del niño, o mascotas verdaderas y animales de su vida mientras esta despierto. Si un niño sueña que está siendo perseguido por un animal o monstruo, vale la pena preguntarse si hay alguna cosa en la vida del niño que lo hace sentirse asustado o angustiado.


So, when you dreamed about flying, what did it feel like?

*_Volar._ Los sueños de volar son generalmente experiencias felices, exuberantes, y muchos niños dicen que son sus sueños favoritos. El significado general de los sueños de volar es el descubrimiento de nuevos poderes y libertad –el niño tiene la experiencia de hacer algo "imposible", y esto puede estimular fuertemente una actitud de esperanza y optimismo hacia el futuro.

*_Caer._ A diferencia de los sueños de volar, los sueños de caerse son experiencias aterradoras que simbolizan el temor del niño de perder su vinculo con personas y/o lugares importantes (el nacimiento de un hermano, mudarse a una casa nueva, o padres que se divorcian).

*_Estar paralizado o atrapado._ Los niños muy chicos están muy conscientes de cuan pequeños son en relación a los adultos, y sus sueños frecuentemente simbolizan este sentimiento con imágenes y sensaciones de estar atrapados, secuestrados, apresados, pegados, incapaces de moverse, etc.

*_Aparecer expuestos o desnudos en publico._ A medida que los niños crecen se ponen muy sensibles a como otras personas los perciben, y a veces se sienten dolorosamente vulnerables a las actitudes y opiniones de otros. El sueño de un niño de estar expuesto en público puede simbólicamente expresar esa preocupación. Los padres deben aprovechar esos sueños como una oportunidad para conversar con sus niños sobre que sienten hacia sus amigos, compañeros de escuela, y otros miembros de la familia.

*_Ser sometidos a exámenes y pruebas._ En una sociedad donde los niños están sometidos a una edad muy temprana a un sinnúmero de reglas, horarios y requisitos sobre sus conductas, es inevitable que esas experiencias también se conviertan en parte de su vida de sueños. Cuando un niño tiene un "sueño de exámenes" particularmente angustioso, esto podría ser una indicación de que las presiones externas sobre el niño, ya sea en la casa o en la escuela, son demasiado fuertes.

Los Padres Sueñan Sobre sus Niños

Ser padre es una experiencia asombrosa. No hay nada en el mundo más maravilloso, más frustrante, más apasionante, y más difícil que criar un niño. Sus sentimientos sobre esto aparecerán frecuentemente en sus propios sueños. Estos sueños pueden ser muy útiles para guiarlos a través de los interminables desafíos de la vida familiar.

Por ejemplo, sus sueños pueden relacionarse directamente a un tema específico de la familia o expresar sentimientos sobre los roles de padre que desempeña su marido o compañero, profesores, y otras personas. Sus sueños pueden remontarse a sus propias experiencias cuando niña, relacionando experiencias del pasado sobre sus padres a experiencias del presente. Ud. puede usar las mismas técnicas para explorar el significado de sus sueños que las que se usan para explorar el significado de los sueños de sus hijos.

La última sugerencia practica es que considere compartir sus sueños con sus hijos, permitiéndoles hacer preguntas y comentarios. Se sorprenderá de la profundidad de las cosas que dicen los niños. Este compartir sueños dentro de la familia puede ayudar a los padres y a sus hijos a desarrollar una sensibilidad cada vez más profunda de los mundos emocionales de cada uno.

***Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D.**, es coautora con Alan Siegel de Dreamcatching: Every Parent's Guide to Understanding and Exploring Childrens Dreams and Nightmares (Three Rivers, 1998) y autora de Transforming Dreams: Learning Sipritual Lessons from the Dreams You Never Forget (John Wiley & Sons, 2000).*

Cuadro Terror Nocturno

Generalmente, los terrores nocturnos no son sueños, sino que desordenes del sueño inocuos, que son muy comunes durante la infancia. Ocurren, generalmente, durante la primera o segunda hora del sueño, y el niño puede gritar, agitarse, y puede ser muy difícil de dspertar. Cuando el niño despierta, él o ella generalmente no recuerda nada sobre la experiencia y se pregunta por qué se preocupan tanto. A pesar de que los terrores nocturnos son extremadamente alarmantes para los padres, que a menudo pueden sentir pánico al ver a sus hijos en ese estado, en la mayoría de los casos no son indicaciones de ningún problema físico o mental. Sin embargo, si su niño experimenta frecuentes episodios de terror nocturno, Ud. debe consultar a su pediatra.

Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D.

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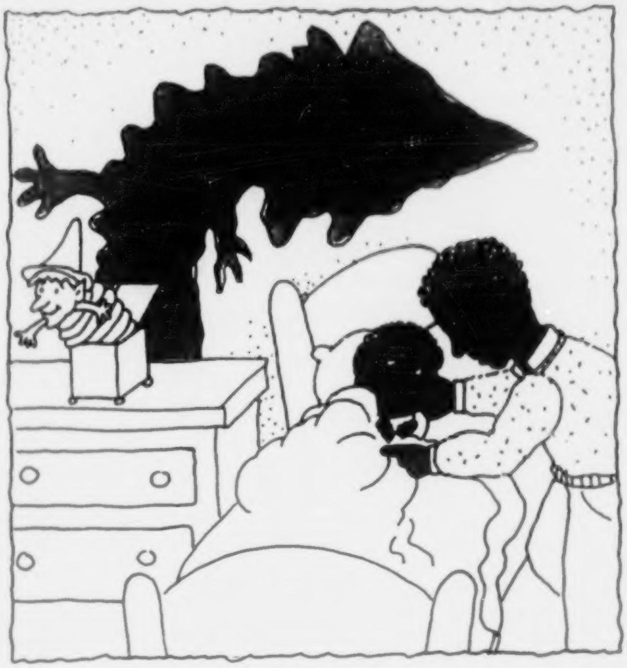

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

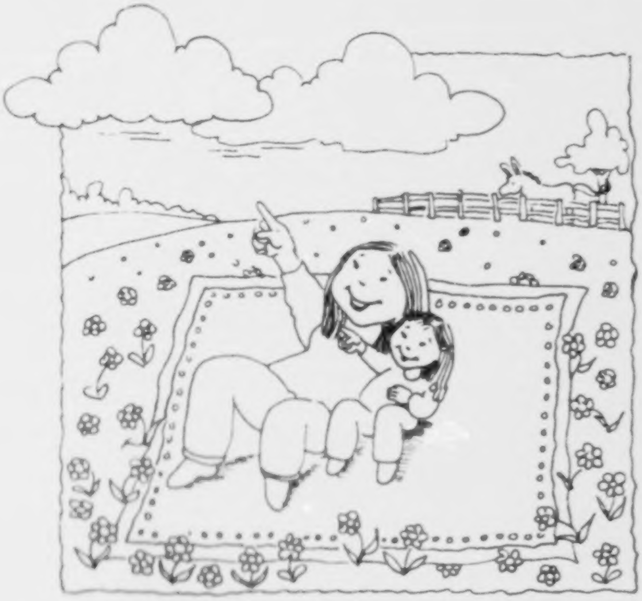
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 15, Number 5 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* May - 2000

The Wonders of the World Through Science

Helping Your Child Open New Doors



One morning last winter I watched a squirrel climb the apple tree in my yard, go out on a tiny limb and hang upside down to pick a triangle of pita bread from the bird feeder. I watched intently, expecting to see him find a perch in the tree so that he could nibble on the crust. But he ran quickly to the ground, found a leafy spot and tucked the bread away, working his two small paws to cover it. Then, he ran up the tree again, repeating his actions, coming down and selecting another spot in the garden for his food.

Six times the squirrel ran up the tree, coming down each time to find a new hiding place. His circle of caches gradually became larger and larger, with the last pieces hidden in the deepest regions of the yard. The day was cold. Was the squirrel thinking of the possibility of snow and cheerless, hungry days when the human who fed him might become forgetful?

Only when all the larger pieces had been "squirreled away" did he return to the feeder one last time to actually feast upon the remaining crumbs.

If only there had been a four-year-old to share these moments with me. We could have conspired to watch the squirrel in the following days to see when necessity forced him to remember his caches. We could have answered questions such as, would the squirrel remember his hiding places? How cold would the temperature have to be before he needed to find his hidden food? Could we even recognize one squirrel from another?

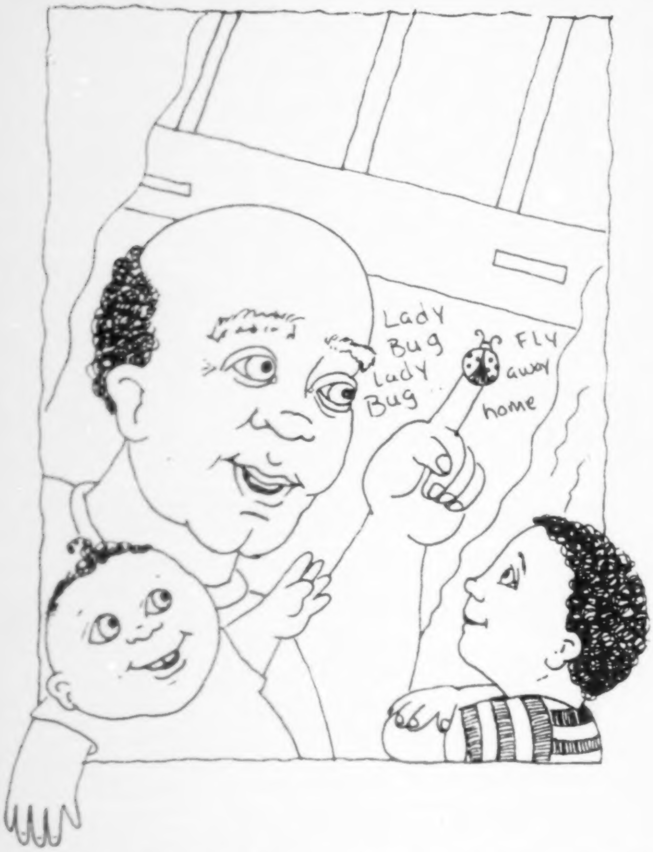
Science begins with observation and leads to conclusions, and very often, more questions.

For young children, science is learning about the natural world around them. And that's just what they want to do. Parents need only tune in and take the time to experience this world with the child. When the child says "Look!" and a responsive adult stops to look, listen, and talk about the child's discovery, learning takes place.

How does a parent or teacher encourage this process? First of all, the child's curiosity must be kindled. Watching clouds on a bright spring day (preferably while lying on your back in a field of daisies) a child may notice that the clouds move, or wonder at the height or colors of the clouds.

The questions that arise can be turned back to the child – "What do you think?" If adults can turn off "book learning" and really listen to what the young child says we will see, over time, how they think.

The important thing is to build steadily on the child's own knowledge and help the child to make connections. All solid learning takes place in context. Our children



aren't well served when we give them too much information too soon.

Animals and Nature

Children can gain insights about the habits of animals by watching them, and even better, by caring for pets at home and at school. The possible range of pets – in tanks, cages, or on the loose – is so wide that almost every family can find an animal that will fit into their lifestyle.

Learning to be responsible for a small creature takes perseverance and training on the part of parents, but it is a task worth doing. Children will learn reverence for life by observing how the important adults in their lives respond to all living things.

Have you ever taken a spider, fly, or ladybug that has ventured indoors back to a safe space outdoors? Your child is watching you, and learning about the importance of life.

Sometimes a child's own first step towards respect for small creatures can be encouraged by an adult. Suppose he sees an ant on the sidewalk. His first impulse may be to step on it. A caring adult can guide the child towards a more humane reaction by encouraging him to find out why the ant is hurrying so. Where is he going? What is he doing? Watching ants go in and out of anthills – sometimes laden with burdens many times their size and weight – can easily and productively occupy a half-hour. Then, use books for follow up, to verify some of the information which has already been observed first-hand.

Science Is All Around Us

Science begins with wonder for the world around her. For example, for a child, a puddle is nature's mirror. Lean over with her and say "Look! I see the clouds." Listen while she responds: "And the trees." Then: "How did you get into the puddle?" There will be much laughter. Then: "I'm not in the puddle." And you say, "But I see you there," as you both look into the water. Her incredulous face answers "Yes, I am there."

In a playful manner this adult-child pair discovered the wonder of reflections -- just one aspect of learning about light.

Later, there can be mini-explorations of shadows, transparency, and color. Perhaps you can look through a stained-glass window, an ordinary piece of colored cellophane, or discover the magic of a kaleidoscope. On a misty morning, a piece of worn beach glass, or a frosty windowpane can spark an interest that will lead to conversations about translucency. You can talk about the way light goes through but distorts the way we see objects and color. A child's early experiences with science are magical.

In the process of using the child's natural world as a science classroom, it is also possible to teach earth-friendly habits and attitudes. A compost heap in a corner of the garden is a perfect demonstration of how things decompose (or don't decompose), and how rich soil can be built to nourish new plants.

Children can begin to learn that what they eat affects their bodies and the world around them. Whether they eat a baked potato or potato chips makes a difference in the amount of fat and salt they consume. The impact of over-packaging can be made evident to young children. Did you ever think of having your children weigh the refuse before you put it out for the garbage truck? Or look at what you toss into the garbage when you've finished eating? How much wrapping is there from the foods you eat? Composting can reduce the load at the same time it enriches the land, and this can be demonstrated to a child.

Gardening with young children is another activity that teaches many things, including patience (to a child it seems a very long time before seeds germinate), and an appreciation of the contribution of each season. Children can learn that without the cold, we would not have beautiful tulips in spring. Without rain many plants will not survive, but others, such as the cactus, will do quite nicely. Without sun, plants will not flower or produce fruit. Children quickly catch a sense of the beauty and orderliness of nature, and the rhythms and the stages of growth when they spend time with a grown-up who shows a love for these things.

Indoor Science

Children also learn about their world indoors. The kitchen makes a marvelous science lab for children. You can show them how heat changes things through the simple act of boiling eggs for sandwiches. If you take the time to crack a raw egg first (or even better, let the child crack an egg into a jar) the cooked egg will clearly demonstrate the change. Or try making pop-up bread (See Science Activities). The force of the yeast causes the rising bread dough to push the cover off a coffee can, much to the delight of the children who have witnessed this phenomenon.

Help children to appreciate and develop their sense of taste and smell. They can dip a wet finger into a pile of flour and again into a small bowl of confectioner's (powdered) sugar. Taste buds tell a story that the eyes cannot see. Another game can be devised with orange rind, onions, and cinnamon sticks (called cinna-mina-mina-mon by a small acquaintance of mine), each placed in their own individual brown bag. As the child puts her nose up to a small hole cut in the side of the bag, the sense of smell reveals the contents.

Nurture a Love of Science

A child's curiosity and love of learning arises spontaneously from within. All it needs to flourish is an adult able to meet the child right there, at the very spot where the questioning arises.

Devote time to really listen to the child and talk with her about the things she is seeing and hearing. Comment on the wind blowing the leaves, the shadows cast by the sun, the bird tugging at bits of straw to build a nest.

Become a co-researcher with your child. Together you can look through encyclopedias and Encarta (an encyclopedia for the computer), field guides to flowers, rocks, and animals. Don't forget that much information can also be found in fiction, such as children's books and poetry.

Extend the child's learning and interest in a subject through well-planned field trips to zoos, aquariums, dinosaur exhibits and botanical gardens or wetlands.

Finally, encourage the child to expand her activities and involvement through taking photographs (using a simple disposable camera), writing in a journal about the things she has seen, and heard (and smelled, too), and drawing pictures of her favorite natural objects and scenes.

Nothing is more inspiring to a child than an enthusiastic, excited adult. Show interest and passion, it will be catching. You and your child will be off on a boundless adventure.

Alice C. Brown, MA is the Director of the Adelphi University Child Activity Center. She is chair of the Accreditation Committee for the Coalition of Child Care in Nassau County and is active in advocacy issues for young children and their families.

Science Activities

Sun Prints

What You'll Need:

Blueprint paper (available at craft and nature stores) or colored construction paper; found objects; pressed leaves or other materials from nature

Take a walk with your youngster around the yard or park, then look around the house for common every-day objects that have an interesting shape. Arrange the objects on a piece of blueprint paper and place in the sun. After a short amount of time the sun will leave a print of the objects. If you can't find blueprint paper you can use ordinary construction paper. However, the construction paper needs to be exposed to the sun for several days, rather than hours or minutes. This will work best when the arrangement can remain indoors on a window sill.

Pop-Up Bread

What You'll Need:

1/2 cup warm water
2 tablespoons sugar
1 large can (13 ounces) evaporated milk
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons salad oil such as corn, or canola
4 cups flour
1 package active dry yeast
2 clean, greased coffee cans and their greased plastic covers

Heat the oven to 350 degrees.

- Sprinkle the yeast over the warm water in a large bowl, adding 1 tablespoon of sugar. Stir until mixed and let stand for 10 minutes, until bubbly.
- Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar, the can of evaporated milk, salt, and salad oil. Mix well.
- Add the flour, one cup at a time, stirring with a wooden spoon.
- Spoon half of the batter into each of the cans and cover with a greased lid.
- Place the cans in a warm place until the dough raises and the lids pop off (about one hour).
- Place the bread-filled cans, without the lids, in the oven and bake for 45 minutes.
- Place on a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes. Slide the bread out of the cans, giving them a little twist, then pulling them out.

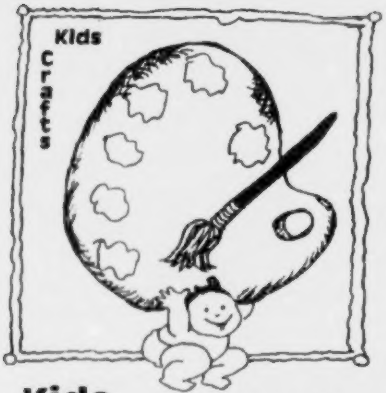
Eat and enjoy.

An Experiment With Dispersion

What You'll Need:

A wide bowl of whole milk (do not use reduced fat milk); food coloring; toothpicks; four bottle caps each filled with: vinegar, honey, liquid detergent; jam.

First, let the child squeeze a few drops of food coloring on the milk, in different sections of the bowl. Dip a toothpick into one of the substances (e.g. vinegar). Then put the tip of the toothpick into the food coloring on the milk. With guidance and questioning from an interested ("I wonder what will happen when ...?") the child can be led to make a scientific discovery. One of the four liquids will disperse the food coloring to make a beautiful design.



Kids Crafts

From their first moment of awareness, kids are on a passionate quest to understand their world. You can turn this natural curiosity into a creative journey. By playfully interacting with artistic tools your child will come to understand how she can influence her world. This will help build the self-confidence necessary for future efforts.

By offering children opportunities to make things, we give them an essential ingredient for growth. By providing situations that encourage playful exploration, a natural way to learn, we open a world of possibilities: one which nurtures originality and problem solving. While it's possible these experiences will spark aesthetic appreciation, that is not the goal. The process is paramount. The thrill and wonder of discovery is a starting point for any creative activity. So, roll up your sleeves, and join in the fun.

Roller Ball Blast

You will need: 2 clean roll-on deodorant bottles; tempera paint in contrasting colors; large white paper.

Take the deodorant bottles and start by pressing under the plastic rim of each bottle and carefully prying underneath to pop the ball off the top. Clean thoroughly. Then fill each one with a different color paint. It's best to use contrasting colors to create an interesting mix of patterns. Try binding both bottles together with a large rubberband to paint big, bright designs. Then, have your child alternate using only one of the colors. This is a romping way to paint without all the mess.

Stone Critters

You will need: Smooth, round stones ranging in size from small to large; tempera or acrylic paints; assorted brushes; hairspray.

First, go on a nature walk and have your child select stones that will be used to make the critters. You can talk about the texture of the stones and the sizes to help your child develop classification skills. Once you have collected the stones, wash them and dry with a paper towel. Then, have your child use a thick brush to paint an entire stone in a bright, solid color. Ask him to think of some real bug with which he is familiar, like a ladybug, or an ant or beetle. Encourage him to imagine his own critter. Let the paint dry. Then, using a fine brush, have your child paint eyes, feelers, and lines. Let the stone dry overnight and spray with hairspray to give a glossy, protective coating.

Zany Animal Art (another critter activity)

You will need: Natural materials (assorted sticks, stones, weeds, pine cones, leaves, nuts); glue or rubber cement.

Pick a sunny day and take a walk to gather materials for the animals. Talk about the materials as they are collected – the way they look, how they feel, and what type of animal your child is going to create.
Once home, have your child study the materials and plan out how she will use them to make an animal. Once she has decided which materials work to form an animal likeness, have her begin gluing. You can help by offering tips about creating: twigs can be used for legs or feelers, pine cones can be bodies, weeds can be hair.

Simple String Painting

You will need: Tempera paint or finger paint; strings; white paper.

Help your child place the string in the paint color of his choice. Then, have him place the string in the center of the paper. Fold the paper over the string. Now, have him gently pull the string out from the middle. When he opens the paper he will discover an interesting design. For variation, have your child mix the thickness and texture of the strings and mix colors to create a intricate design.

Dear Reader

I have loved science as far back as I can remember. In fact, when I was growing up my family celebrated almost every holiday (including Mother's Day) with a trip to the planetarium. When my son was young we did something similar, visiting every museum and zoo we could find. And somewhere, between when I was little and when my son was little, museums changed. "Stuffy" science gave way to "touch, feel and play with" science. It was so handy having a child to take to these wonderful places.

Of course, science is all around us. It's watching the stars, and the ocean. It's tracking the time of sunset as the days gradually lengthen. Watching spiders spin webs. I can't imagine science ever being dull, and neither can Alice Brown. In our feature this month Alice finds science in all aspects of our lives. She's even supplied some fun activities.

Dawn Barhyte is also here with crafts. Dawn has always incorporated nature and science into her wonderful ideas. This month is no exception.

More? You got it. Kathy Wollard answers your child's science questions and Library Resources is filled with reviews of books that celebrate science.

We never really outgrow our fascination with our world. And that's science.

Neala Schwartzberg

Kids' Science Questions

Kids have questions - lots of questions. Here are some your children may be asking, and excerpts of the answers from ***How Come? Planet Earth*** by Kathy Wollard.

? What makes dew appear on grass?

Appearing seemingly from nowhere, and glistening on every blade of grass, leaf, and flower, people used to think dew was nectar from heaven. But dew isn't confined to early-morning grass. A kind of dew appears on cold pipes in hot weather, and on the outside of ice-filled glasses in summer. Dew happens when water-filled air comes into contact with cooler surfaces – a blade of grass, a cold-water pipe, an ice-filled glass.

Here's how. The air, overfull of water vapor, touches a cool blade of grass. The water vapor cools when it touches the grass, turning into a liquid and dripping onto the grass. These droplets combine with the water which is naturally evaporating from the plants. Soon, the whole lawn is covered with drops, which will glisten and shine when the Sun rises in the early morning.

? Where does dust come from?

Have you ever sat near a sunny window and noticed that the beam of sunlight is full of floating, tumbling dust? Have you ever wiped off your dresser, only to find it covered with a powdery layer of something a day or two later? Do enormous dust bunnies live under your bed?

Perhaps there's a secret factory somewhere that spews clouds of the stuff into the air at night, recycled from the vacuum cleaner bags we put in the trash.

In reality, dust happens because Things Fall Apart. Most dust is made of tiny fragments broken off larger things. The world is always crumbling to dust, and much of it finds its way into our homes.

The stuff floating dreamily in a sunbeam could very well be the dirt you just tracked in from outdoors, bits of soil mixed with pulverized concrete worn off the sidewalk, with just a hint of rubber sole. Dust can be made of anything and everything. Imagine all the things on Earth that are constantly being worn down by erosion, burned up in incinerators, shaved off by band saws, and picked up by wind.

Plants dry up, crumble to bits, and blow around in the air. Your own dead skin cells are constantly flaking off. In fact, most of the dust you push around with a feather duster week after week may be coming from your and your family's shedding bodies: By weight, up to 70 percent of house dust can be skin cells. Making *you* the dust factory.

? Why do people get goose bumps?

People have been using "goose" words for temporarily bumpy skin since at least the early 1800s. What do these bumps have to do with geese? People used to eat a lot more goose than they do now, especially on holidays. After a goose has been plucked of its feathers, its body is covered with little bumps where the feathers once sprouted. So when little bumps rose on someone's arms, people thought their skin looked like goose flesh or goose bumps.

What causes goose bumps? Goose bumps spring up when small muscles around hair follicles suddenly contract. This pushes up a bit of skin and hair, making a bump. Have you ever seen your cat's tail puff out suddenly, or a porcupine's quills suddenly spring up? These are forms of goose bumps, too.

Animals, us included, get goose bumps when they are startled or threatened.

Goose bumps also break out when we get an abrupt chill. Why? Because our distant ancestors had fur. And for animals, fur fluffing up in the cold provides better insulation.

? Why does our breath smell bad, especially in the morning?

Most of us, if not all of us, have bad breath now and then. And we humans aren't the only ones to breathe out smelly air. Dog breath can be pretty foul, too.

One cause of smelly breath is the pungent food we eat. For example, after we digest garlic, its odor will perfume air in the lungs (and even seep through the pores in our skin).

But 90 percent of bad breath comes from everyday conditions in the mouth. Tiny particles of food collect between or under teeth, braces, and dentures. And there they sit, sometimes for days on end.

Bacteria that live in the mouth and feast on the tiny leftovers actually create the bad smell. As they chow down, their waste products emit sulfur gases. These bacteria especially like to hang out on the back of the tongue, creating that carpet of white we sometimes see when we wake up in the morning.

What can you do about bad breath? Brush and floss your teeth, to get all the between-teeth food particles out. Then gently brush your tongue, especially the rear part, with your toothbrush.

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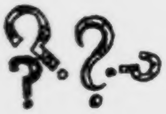

Library Resources

Your Body

🕮 ***Your Insides*** by Joanna Cole; illustrated by Paul Meisel; PaperStar Books; New York, 1992; Softcover, $9.99. An excellent and complete introduction to the human body. The lively writing and illustrations and several "see-though" pages will fascinate older children, and some younger ones too.

🕮 ***Parts*** by Tedd Arnold; Dial Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.99. Oh no! First it's his hair, and then belly-button lint and peeling skin. And then his teeth! This little boy fears he is literally falling apart. With humor and sensitivity this excellent book helps children understand how bodies renew themselves.

Five Senses

🕮 ***Busy Bunnies Five Senses*** by Teddy Slater; illustrated by Maggie Swanson; Scholastic, Inc.; New York, 1999; Softcover, $3.99. Each of the senses is addressed one at a time as a group of bunnies go exploring in their world.

🕮 ***You Smell*** by Mary Murphy; DK, Ink; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $9.95. An exploration of all the senses with a reassuring Mother Dog and Little Dog theme. They hear the leaves rustle in the breeze, take a bath, and end with a hug and a bedtime story.

Nature

🕮 ***Animals in Camouflage*** by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes; Charlesbridge; Watertown, MA, 2000; Softcover, $6.95. The first page presents a description of a creature (some familiar such as a polar bear, some unfamiliar, such as a leafy sea dragon). Turn the page for a close-up and further information on the creature. Then, for more fun, go back and see if you can find it in the original illustration.

🕮 ***Each Living Thing*** by Joanne Ryder; illustrations by Ashley Wolff; Gulliver Books/Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA, 2000; Hardcover, $16.00. A simple book with gentle pictures about treating all living creatures, even ants, bats, and snakes, with care and respect.

🕮 ***I Am a Leaf*** by Jean Marzollo; illustrated by Judith Moffat; Scholastic, Inc.; New York, 1998; Softcover, $3.99. Clever cut-paper illustrations enhance the science content as a leaf describes what it is, how it grows, and the changes brought by the seasons. Another book by the same team is ***I Am Snow***. With less technical information this book is appropriate for younger children.

🕮 ***In the Jungle*** by Anna Nilsen; illustrated by Peter Joyce; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1994; Sticker book, $3.99. Filled with riddle clues and stickers to teach children about the animals in the jungle.

🕮 ***Max Loves Sunflowers*** by Ken Wilson-Max; Hyperion Books; New York, 1998; Pop-up, $12.95. Max plants sunflower seeds and watches them grow. A nice introduction to gardening and nature.

🕮 ***Our Stars*** by Anne Rockwell; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA, 1999; Hardcover, $13.00. Explore the sky with your youngster. This book describes the stars (and that our sun is really a star), the constellations, planets, meteors, and comets.

🕮 ***What Can You Do in the ...?*** by Anna Grossnickle Hines; pictures by Thea Kliros; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1999; Board books, $5.95. Part of a series of books exploring the Sun, Wind, Snow, and Rain. Charming pictures highlight the activities. What can children do in the rain? Feel the rain fall. Make a mud pie. Sail a leaf boat. The books all have the same engaging format.

🕮 ***Who Hops?*** by Katie Davis; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA, 1998; Hardcover, $13.00. Colorful, simple, yet engaging, depiction of the creatures who hop, fly, slither and more.

How Things Work

🕮 ***Color Dance*** by Ann Jonas; Mulberry Books; New York, 1989; Softcover, $4.95. Three little girls dance their way across the pages of the book swirling their large scarves of blue, red, and yellow to create colors.

🕮 ***Telling Time*** written by Jules Older; illustrated by Megan Halsey; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 2000; Softcover $6.95. What is time? How and why do we measure it? Clocks, calendars, Roman numerals, and more are part of this lively book.

📼 ***Works: Fun and Games***; Sony Wonder; Videocassette; $7.98. May be a bit beyond preschoolers but the series' concept is excellent. Each tape begins and ends in a children's clubhouse where a magic hat "answers" questions about how things are made. The cassette on *Fun and Games* is particularly interesting for little ones who can watch as crayons, kites, puppets, and more are created.

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Pp Parent and preschooler

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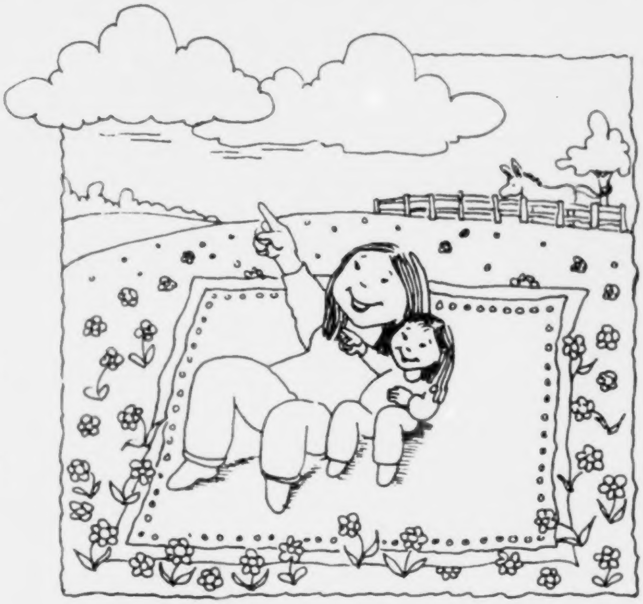
Las Maravillas del Mundo a Través de la Ciencia

Ayudando a su Niño Abrir Puertas Nuevas



Una mañana, durante el invierno pasado, me dediqué a mirar a una ardilla trepar un manzano, subirse por una pequeña rama y colgarse patas arriba para sacar un pedazo de pan de la vasija para alimentar pájaros. Lo miré cuidadosamente, esperando que encontrara un asidero en el árbol para que pudiera comerse el pan. Sin embargo, corrió rápidamente a la tierra, encontró un lugar lleno de hojas y guardo el pan, cubriéndolo con sus dos pequeñas patitas. Después, se subió al árbol otra vez, repitiendo sus acciones, descendiendo y seleccionando otro lugar del jardín para guardar su comida.

Seis veces la ardilla se subió al árbol, y seis veces se bajó y buscó un nuevo escondite. Su círculo de escondites paulatinamente aumentó de tamaño, y los últimos pedazos fueron escondidos en las partes más apartadas del jardín. El día estaba frío. ¿La ardilla estaría pensando sobre la posibilidad que nevara y sobre los días tristes y hambrientos en que el ser humano que la alimenta pudiese olvidarse?

Solo cuando los pedazos

Mas grandes fueron ocultados, el animalito volvió a la vasija por ultima vez a comerse las migajas restantes.

Si solo hubiese habido un niño de cuatro anos para poder haber compartido estos momentos.

Pudiésemos haber conspirado a observar la ardilla durante los próximos días para ver si la necesidad la obligaba a recordar sus escondites. Pudiésemos haber contestado preguntas tales como, ¿se acordaba la ardilla de sus escondites? ¿A cuanto tenía que bajar la temperatura para que la ardilla buscara su comida escondida? ¿Podríamos reconocer una ardilla de otra?

La ciencia empieza con observaciones y lleva a conclusiones, y muy a menudo, a más preguntas.

Para los niños chicos, la ciencia es aprender sobre el mundo natural que los rodea. Y eso es exactamente lo que quieren hacer. Los padres solo tienen que "ponerse en onda" y darse el tiempo para experimentar este mundo con el niño. Cuando el niño dice, ¡"Mira"! y un adulto sensible se detiene a mirar, escuchar, y conversar con el niño sobre su descubrimiento, el niño aprende.

¿Cómo puede un padre o un maestro alentar este proceso? Primero, la curiosidad de un niño tiene que ser despertada. Observar las nubes en un día de primavera luminoso (preferiblemente de espaldas en un campo bordado de margaritas) un niño puede notar que las nubes se mueven, o asombrarse de la altura o de los colores de las nubes.

Las preguntas que surgen pueden ser planteadas al niño: ¿"Qué crees tu"? Si los adultos pudiesen olvidar los "conocimientos de libros" y realmente escuchasen lo que dice el niño nos daríamos cuenta, después de un tiempo, como piensan.

Lo importante es construir constantemente sobre sus propios conocimientos y ayudar al niño a plantearse conexiones. Todo aprendizaje sólido ocurre en un contexto. No se ayuda a los niños cuando se les da excesiva información demasiado prematuramente.

Los Animales y la Naturaleza

Los niños pueden obtener una percepción sobre los hábitos de los animales observándolos, y preferiblemente, cuidándolos como mascotas en la escuela y en la casa. Las distintas posibilidades de mascotas - en tanques, jaulas, o sueltos- es tan amplia que casi cualquier familia puede encontrar un animal apropiado a su estilo de vida.

Aprender a asumir responsabilidad de un pequeño animal requiere perseverancia y capacitación de parte de los padres, pero bien vale la pena. Los niños aprenderán reverencia por la vida al observar como adultos que son importantes en su vida responden a todas las cosas vivas.

¿Ud. alguna vez ha tomado una mosca o una araña que se ha metido a la casa y la ha devuelto a un lugar seguro afuera? Su niño lo está observando y aprendiendo sobre la importancia de la vida.

A veces los primeros pasos de un niño hacia el respeto por las criaturas pequeñas puede ser alentado por un adulto. Supongamos que Ud. ve una hormiga en la vereda. Su primer impulso puede ser pisarla. Un adulto compasivo puede guiar al niño a una reacción más humana alentándolo a averiguar por qué se apura la hormiga. ¿A donde va? Qué hace? Observar a las hormigas entrar y salir de sus hormigueros —a veces cargadas de cosas muchas veces más grandes que ellas--- puede fácilmente ocupar productivamente una media hora. Después, use libros para un seguimiento y para verificar algo de la información que se ha obtenido de primera mano.

La Ciencia Está en Todas Partes

La ciencia comienza con el asombro del mundo que la rodea. Por ejemplo, para una niña un charco es el espejo de la naturaleza. Acérquese a ella y diga "Mira! Puedo ver las nubes". Escuche cuando ella responda: "Y los arboles". Dígale entonces: ¿"Cómo te metiste al charco"? Habrá mucha risa. Y entonces dirá: "No estoy en el charco". Y Ud. le dice: "Pero si yo te puedo ver", a medida que ambas miran el agua. Su cara incrédula contesta "Si, ahí estoy".

De una manera juguetona esta pareja adulto-niña descubrió las maravillas de los reflejos — sólo uno de los aspectos de la luz. Más adelante, pueden haber mini-exploraciones de las sombras, transparencia y color. Quizás Uds. pueden mirar a un vitral, un pedazo de celofán común, o descubrir la magia de un caleidoscopio. En una mañana de niebla, un pedazo de vidrio de playa gastado, o una ventana empañada puede suscitar interés que puede llevar a una conversación sobre la transparencia. Pueden hablar sobre la manera en que la luz pasa a través pero distorsiona la manera en que vemos objetos y color. Las primeras experiencias de un niño con la ciencia son mágicas.

En el proceso de usar el mundo natural de un niño como su sala de ciencia, también es posible enseñarles hábitos y actitudes eco-amigables. Un lugar en un rincón del jardín para producir abono orgánico es una demostración perfecta sobre la descomposición (o no descomposición) de las cosas, y de como se puede hacer tierra para nutrir nuevas plantas.

Los niños pueden empezar a aprender que lo que comen afecta sus cuerpos y el mundo a su alrededor. Si comen papas al horno o papas fritas es importante en cuanto a la cantidad de sal y de grasas que consumen. El impacto de envasar las cosas excesivamente puede ser demostrado a los niños chicos. ¿Alguna vez se le ocurrió que sus niños pesaran la basura antes de dejarla lista para el camión de basura? ¿O ha mirado lo que bota a la basura cuando ha terminado de comer? Cuantos envoltorios quedan de las comidas que consumen? Hacer abono disminuye la carga y al mismo tiempo enriquece la tierra, y esto puede ser fácilmente explicado a un niño.

Trabajar en jardinería con niños chicos es otra actividad que enseña muchas cosas, incluyendo paciencia (para un niño ver germinar una semilla parece una eternidad), y un aprecio de las contribuciones de cada estación. Los niños pueden aprender que sin el frío, no podríamos tener los maravillosos tulipanes de la primavera. Sin lluvia muchas plantas no podrán sobrevivir, pero otras, como los cactus crecerán fácilmente. Sin sol, las plantas no florecerán o producirán frutas. Los niños rápidamente captan el sentido de la belleza y el orden de la naturaleza y los ritmos y etapas de crecimiento cuando pasan tiempo con adultos que demuestran amor por estas cosas.

La Ciencia Puertas Adentro

Los niños también pueden aprender sobre su mundo al interior de sus casas. La cocina es un maravilloso laboratorio de ciencia para los niños. Se les puede demostrar como el calor cambia las cosas a través de la simple acción de hervir huevos para hacer sandwiches. Si Ud. se da el tiempo de quebrar un huevo crudo antes (incluso es mejor que el niño quiebre el huevo en un jarrón) el huevo cocido demostrara claramente el cambio. O trate de hacer pan levadizo (Véase Actividades Científicas). La fuerza de la levadura causa que la maza del pan en expansión haga saltar la tapa de un tarro de café, deleitando a los niños que han presenciado el fenómeno.

Ayude a los niños a apreciar y desarrollar su sentido de gusto y olfato. Por ejemplo, pueden meter un dedo húmedo en un montoncito de harina y después en un pequeño envase de azúcar flor. La papilas gustativas de la lengua nos cuentan algo que los ojos no pueden ver. Otro juego que puede inventarse es con cascaras de

Lady Bug Lady Bug
FLY away home

naranja, cebollas, y clavos de canela (llamados cane-la-cane-lala por un amiguito mío), cada uno puesto en su propia bolsa de papel. A medida que el niño pone su nariz en un pequeño hoyo que se ha hecho en el lado de la bolsa, el sentido de olor revela los contenidos.

Sustente el Amor por la Ciencia

La curiosidad y el amor a aprender de un niño surge espontáneamente de su interior. Lo único que necesita para que florezca es un adulto que esté dispuesto a juntarse con el niño en el mismo lugar donde surgen las preguntas,

Dedique tiempo a realmente escuchar a su niña y a conversar con ella sobre las cosas que esta viendo y escuchando. Haga comentarios sobre el viento que mueve las hojas, las sombras producidas por el sol, los pájaros que arrastran pedazos de paja para construir un nido.

Conviértase en un co-investigador con su niña. Juntos pueden mirar enciclopedias y Encarta (una enciclopedia para la computadora), manuales de campo para flores, piedras y animales. No se olvide que mucha información también puede ser obtenida de obras de ficción, como libros infantiles y poesía.

Expanda los conocimientos e intereses del niño sobre un tema a través de viajes bien planificados a zoológicos, acuarios, exhibiciones de dinosaurios y jardines botánicos, o a zonas pantanosas.

Finalmente, aliente al niño a expandir sus actividades e involucramiento tomando fotos (usando una sencilla máquina deshechable), escribiendo un diario sobre las cosas que ha visto y escuchado (y también olido), y a dibujar sus objetos y paisajes naturales favoritos.

Nada inspira más a un niño que un adulto entusiasta y comprometido —demuestre interés y pasión ya que son contagiosas. Ud. y su niño habrán iniciado una aventura sin limites.

Alice C. Brown, MA es la Directora de Adelphi University Child Activity Center. Ella es Presidenta del Accreditation Committee for he Coalition of Child Care en el Condado de Nassau y esta muy activa en temas de defensa y promoción de niños jóvenes y sus familias.

Actividades Científicas

Heliografías (impresiones del sol)

Que Necesitará
Papel heliográfico (se puede obtener en tiendas de artesanías o en tiendas naturalistas) o, papel grueso de color; objetos encontrados, tales como hojas u otros materiales de la naturaleza.

Haga un paseo con su niño en su jardín o en el parque y después busque en la casa objetos comunes que tengan formas interesantes. Arregle los objetos sobre un pedazo de papel heliográfico y póngalo al sol. Después de un rato el sol dejará una impresión de los objetos. Si no puede encontrar papel heliográfico se puede usar papel grueso ordinario. Sin embargo, este papel tiene que ser expuesto al sol por varios días en vez de horas o minutos. Esto funciona mejor cuando las cosas pueden dejarse adentro de la casa en la solera de la ventana.

Pan Levadizo

Que Necesitará
1/2 taza de agua tibia
2 cucharaditas de azúcar
1 tarro grande (13 onzas) de leche evaporada
1 cucharadita de sal
2 cucharaditas de aceite vegetal (de maíz o canola)
4 tazas de harina
1 paquete de levadura activa seca
2 tarros limpios engrasados y sus tapas de plástico engrasadas
Caliente el horno a 350 grados.

*Esparza la levadura sobre el agua tibia en una vasija grande, agregando 1 cucharadita de azúcar. Revuelva hasta que se mezcle y déjelo tranquilo por 10 minutos hasta que aparezcan burbujas.
*Agregue las 2 restantes cucharaditas de azúcar, el tarro de leche evaporada, sal y aceite vegetal. Revuelva bien.
*Agregue la harina, una taza a la vez, revolviendo con una cuchara de madera.
*Vierta la mitad del batido a cada uno de los tarros y cúbralo con la tapa engrasada.
*Ponga los tarros en un lugar caluroso hasta que la masa se levante y las tapas salten (alrededor de una hora).
*Ponga el pan sin las tapas en el horno por 45 minutos.
*Póngalo sobre una rejilla para que se enfríe 10 minutos. Saque el pan deslizándolo de los tarros con un leve torcimiento y después tire.
*Cómalo y disfrútelo.

Un Experimento en Dispersión

Que Necesitará:
Una vasija de poca profundidad de leche (no use leche descremada);

colorante para alimentos; escarbadientes; cuatro tapas de botella, cada una llena de vinagre, miel, detergente líquido, mermelada.

Primero, deje que el niño exprima unas pocas gotas de colorante para alimentos sobre la leche, en distintas secciones de la vasija. Sumerja un escarbadientes en cada una de las sustancias (por ejemplo, el vinagre). Después ponga la punta del escarbadientes en el colorante de alimentos sobre la leche. Con supervisión y preguntas de un adulto interesado (¿"Que pasara cuando..."?) el niño puede ser guiado a hacer un descubrimiento científico. Uno de los cuatro líquidos dispersará el colorante y producirá un diseño maravilloso.

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Family Rituals and Traditions

The Events That Hold Families Together

What are your favorite memories of childhood? The nightly bedtime story? The family vacation? Perhaps you remember Thanksgiving, Christmas, or the weekly Sabbath meal. Your worst memories might also be connected with these family rituals. But, it turns out that family rituals are the glue that holds families together.

What are family rituals? And what does it take to turn a family routine into a family ritual?

These are activities that have meaning and significance. An activity becomes a ritual when it is significant, repeated, and coordinated. For example, for most families bathing and grooming are routines. Although they are repeated and coordinated, they do not have symbolic importance. But if you make your child's daily bath into a relaxing and enjoyable time to connect with your child, that routine becomes a ritual.

To be a ritual, the activity must also be repeated. An occasional, unplanned trip to a cabin is not a ritual, whereas an eagerly anticipated annual trip would be.

Finally, a ritual must be coordinated. A meal that each person fixes and eats separately would not qualify as a family ritual, whereas one that everyone deliberately eats together would be a family ritual if done regularly and infused with meaning for the family.

Why Have Family Rituals?

In a world in which we are often isolated, family rituals give us connections to one another, a sense of identity, and a sense of values. They provide reassuring predictability, the feeling of regularity and order. Knowing that the father will talk to his child and read a story every night makes bed time something to look forward to and savor. If having bed-time talks and stories has to be negotiated every night there is no predictability and the ritual loses its power.

Family rituals give us a sense of connection. A bath time ritual may be the main one-to-one time between a father and his child. Trips to see grandparents provide the glue in the grandparent-grandchild relationship. A family meal is a place for the telling of family stories. These enable us to connect to one another in meaningful ways.

Family rituals give us identity as a member of the family, a sense of who belongs to the family, and what is special about that family. You may know who your core members are by who is invited to the Thanksgiving meal; including non-relatives in these rituals makes them "family." Families who do interesting vacations together acquire the self-image of a fun loving family. They will say "We are campers" or "We are hikers."

Family rituals give us a way to enact values. They help us demonstrate what we believe and hold dear. Religious rituals are a good example, as is a family's collective volunteering for community work, or expecting the children to join in regular family visits to a grandparent in a nursing home, because it is important to honor and support elderly

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family members.

Who is Involved?

Family rituals by definition involve more than one family member. But not all family rituals necessarily involve the whole family. Some involve just two members: a married couple having a dinner out, or a parent reading to a child. Some involve sub-groups, as when my father used to take my sister and me to Philadelphia Phillies baseball games. Rituals can involve the larger extended family, such as family reunions and holiday rituals. Other traditions involve close friends of the family, or even a larger community such as a church or synagogue or a volunteer group to support the local children's museum. It is important to remember that there can be different combinations of participants in family rituals.

Kinds of Family Rituals

I like to classify family rituals by the function they serve for families, the needs they meet. Thus, there are rituals for connection or bonding, rituals for showing love to individual family members, and rituals that bind the family to the larger community.

Connection rituals provide opportunities for family bonding. Family meals and trips away from home, from rides to the ice cream store to major family vacations all encourage the building of connections between family members. There can be smaller daily rituals around getting up in the morning, going to bed at night, and the comings and going of family members to and from work, daycare, and school.

Love rituals develop one-to-one intimacy and make individual family members feel special. Couple love rituals could be anniversaries, Valentine's Day celebration, and going out on a date. Special person rituals can apply to adults or children and generally center around birthdays, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.

Community rituals have a public dimension and involve conscious efforts to connect with a wider social network than the family. They include major family events and transitions such as births, weddings and funerals, as well as religious activities in faith communities.

Finally, holiday rituals like Thanksgiving and Christmas have evolved into a special category of family ritual, involving all three functions of rituals: connection; love; and community. They are the grand rituals of the calendar year for the majority of American families, Christian and non-Christian alike.

Rituals in Different Kinds of Families

There is no universal yardstick for measuring family traditions for all of our diverse contemporary families. Remarried families will have different needs than first married families. Single parent families will be different than two parent families. Different ethnic traditions may expect different degrees of flexibility or structure in family rituals. Some families are tied closely to their ethnic origins and extended family, and some are less closely involved. Families who are experiencing peaceful periods will feel freer to be creative with their rituals, while others undergoing tremendous stress need to hang on to what they have. There is no formula for all this diversity, but at the core of each family should be its rituals of connection, love, and community.

Finding Time for Rituals

How can we become more intentional about our family rituals in the face of the time shortage most of us experience? What if you already feel overwhelmed? Will thinking about enhancing your family rituals just make you feel even more stressed? I offer two general strategies.

First, make better use of the time you already spend on family activities. You have to feed your children, so start with improving the quality of those meals, without lengthening the time. Make dinner (or lunch, or breakfast) a time when the whole family eats together and tells something about their day.

You have to put your kids to bed. Try to make it more intentional and planned. Read aloud to your child or sing a bedtime song. You probably have birthday parties, holiday celebrations, or countless other family activities. You can try to enhance their quality while not extending their number or their time burden.

Second, experiment with carving time out of another activity that gets more than its fair share of your attention. Here is the place for taming technology. The average American spends over four hours per day watching television, or about half of our non-sleep, non-work time. There is definitely room there to carve out time for family rituals!

Creating or Changing Rituals

Suppose you've captured time for family rituals, how can you put new rituals into place, or turn existing routines into rituals?

Make something happen one time without major comment, then ask other family members how they liked it and whether they would like to do it again. You might say, "Why don't we try something different this time?" If family members enjoy the new experience they may want to continue. I did this once with my wife and children when I proposed that, during that Christmas meal, we each express some appreciation to the other family members. I brought it up a few days before Christmas so that everyone could think about what they might want to say. No one objected. During the meal that year, we had a lovely exchange of appreciations, a real moment of family intimacy. And the exchange became a regular Christmas ritual.

Elevate a routine into a ritual by giving it meaning. After moving to Minnesota in 1986, my family started going to Davanni's restaurant for pizza. After several months of going every Friday night, we began to realize that we had the makings of a family tradition, and decided together to commit to it as a going-out ritual of connection – a time for a different kind of family conversation over a food we all enjoyed. Even now, when my kids are in their 20s, they signal that they want family time by calling home to suggest we do pizza at Davanni's.

Negotiate a new ritual or changing an existing one. Bring up your idea at a calm moment and without criticism. You can say that you are feeling the need for a change in how your family eats dinner, or does its existing dinner ritual. Describe what is missing for you and what you want to try. For example, you may want to turn off the television during dinner and, perhaps, light a decorative candle at the table. If other family members are willing, you can try this for a period of time. It may take a bit of time to get used to the new ritual, so be patient, and be willing to make reasonable adjustments and compromises that do not defeat the purpose of the ritual.

Managing Family Rituals Over Time

Once you have good family traditions in place, keeping them alive takes work and vigilance. Here is a summary of the major principles I have developed for managing family rituals over time:

Adult agreement. If you and your spouse, partner, or co-parent do not agree on the ritual, it will not work well. Take the time to negotiate the needs, values, and goals of your family rituals with your adult partner. Otherwise, you will be too responsible for making the rituals work.

Ultimately the children have to like it. A ritual that works well will eventually win the allegiance of the children. But if they continue to complain and resist over time, consider overhauling, substituting, or dropping the ritual.

Maximize participation. The more that family members are involved in planning and carrying out the ritual, the more meaningful it is likely to be.

Have clear expectations. Rituals of all kinds require enough coordination that people know what to do and when to do it.

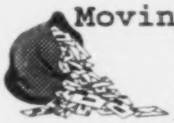
Minimize conflict. Although disagreements can always pop up in families, the most successful rituals occur without regular tension and conflict.

Protect rituals from erosion. Shortages of time and energy threaten all family rituals making it difficult to be consistent and tempting us to cut them short. But good rituals are worth protecting.

Be open to change. It may sound like a contradiction, but traditions have their seasons for planting, cultivating, and pruning. Families are forever changing while holding on to their important traditions.

Most families have some rituals they enjoy, some they don't enjoy but feel stuck with, and some they could benefit from creating or refurbishing. Think about any current rituals you might want to remodel, and new ones you might want to try. The payoffs for your family can be enormous.

William J. Doherty, Ph.D., is a professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota, and a practicing marriage and family therapist. He is author of "The Intentional Family: Simple Rituals to Strengthen Family Ties" (Avon, 1999); and "Take Back Your Kids: Confident Parenting in Turbulent Times" (Sorin Books, March, 2000).



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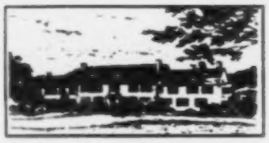

Rituals and Traditions

What We Do At Our House

Many families already have wonderful traditions. Without even knowing it, your own family may have established some special rituals. Here is a sampling from our friends and relatives.

☆ ***From Dana:*** Our family has a tradition that may seem very simple but has become very special for all of us. When it is someone's birthday, they can request whatever they would like for the birthday dinner and our mom will cook it.

This may not sound special, but over the years, our family has received some funny and different dinner requests. People begin thinking about "their" dinner weeks in advance, and though everyone tries to "top" the previous birthday dinner, there are some requests that have become traditions in their own right. Mom's baked ham followed by cannoli cake, my brother's pastilles (a scrumptious Puerto Rican meat pie), and my favorite homemade strawberry shortcake are just a few of the "regulars" on the menu. The laughter always abounds and this tradition has become important and fun for the entire family.

☆ ***From Jean:*** This family ritual began when my husband and I were newlyweds. Two weeks before Christmas, on a Saturday, we have *Tree Day*. On that morning everyone awakens early and we all prepare a huge breakfast. Then we dress and make sandwiches and a thermos of coffee for lunch. When all is ready, off we go to get our Christmas tree. Sometimes this involves going to the tree farm and cutting our tree - or in years when we're not so ambitious - it means visits to many Christmas tree lots to find the perfect tree.

During the day, we eat our lunch sandwiches on the run. When the tree is found, it's back home for setting it up and decorating. A few weeks prior to *Tree Day*, everyone buys one special ornament (often commemorating something special that happened that year such as a birth, graduation, or wedding) and on *Tree Day* we hang them on the tree. This is followed by my husband's special five-alarm chili with hot, crunchy Italian bread. *Tree Day* is a wonderful family ritual that has lasted 33 years and it is one that we all treasure.

☆ ***From Beth:*** There were two traditions that started when my son was little. Actually, the Sunday morning pancakes was my treat to myself, but Erik loved them and it soon became a regular part of the weekend. Erik's contribution (besides enthusiastically eating the pancakes) was to pick whether we should have them plain, with blueberries, or strawberries, or sometimes with both. If he had no preference, I picked. That was fine with both of us. He simply wanted to eat pancakes on Sunday mornings, with lots of real maple syrup.

The other tradition was part of his bedtime ritual. Erik had bad dreams and I wanted him to be in a happy frame of mind when he went to sleep. So, we'd talk about the events he was eagerly anticipating over the next day or two. Then I'd rub his back and say "I want you to sleep well. I want you to sleep late. I want you to sleep so late that by the time you wake up it will be time for you to ...," filling in the activity to come. It could be playing with a friend, going out with his father and me, or even watching his favorite warm and fuzzy television show. The only criteria were that it be something he was looking forward to, and it be nonviolent.

☆ ***From Bob:*** During the 1950s, my father and I had a Friday evening ritual, the memory of which is still dear to me. On Friday evenings, my mother would go shopping. After dropping her off at the store, my Dad and I would return home to watch our favorite shows on our new Dumont television, "Ozzie and Harriet" and "The Life of Reilly." Those evenings would also be spent with my father teaching me a song or a magic trick that I would then perform for my mom upon her return home.

There was one special magic trick involving a black gumball that had me mystified for years. My father would leave the black gumball in a special crystal dish. The next morning the gumball would have magically turned white. I never figured this out. Years later, he told me that during the night he would wash the black color off of the gumball, dry it, and replace it in the dish!

What special traditions do you have? If you think about it you'll probably come up with some. If not, now is the time to begin some traditions that someday will have a cherished place in your family's memory book.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

I think they ought to subscribe to the Parent & Preschooler News-letter

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Preschooler in the Kitchen

Grandma's Friday Night

Apple-Egg Pie

We all have something comfortable to remember about our childhood. For me it was Fridays. That was when I would come home for the weekends from school. I very much missed my father during the week, so it was a wonderful treat to come home, and help Papa to prepare our special pie for Friday night. We often made more than two pies, this way we would have it for Saturday, or Sunday before I went back to school.

This pie has an African background. It came from my Grandmother Maria, who was Angolese (from the country of Angola in Africa) with a Sephardic Jewish heritage. She eventually moved to Spain where my father was born. I never met her, but I have memories of Papa telling me stories about her and Grandpa Daniel. Papa told me that in Spain the family always had this pie on Friday nights for the Shabbath. So, it was natural that we made a ritual of having this pie every Friday night in our home in Brazil.

We always had company to share our Friday night dinner. We made a chicken soup, the Apple and Egg Pie, and fruits for dessert.

When you prepare this pie, remember it came from three different countries (Africa, Spain, and Brazil), and it is two centuries old. The pie was originally made with quinces, but I like it made with apples. It's tastier, and the apples are readily available in this country.

As I always say to the parents, please take your children with you to the market, and teach them how to choose the fruits and ingredients. Make it your ritual.

Are you ready? Wash your hands, put on your aprons. Gather all the ingredients together. The puff pastry can be found, frozen, in all supermarket freezers.

Apple-Egg Pie

6 tart apples, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons lemon juice, freshly squeezed
1 large onion, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons butter, or vegetable oil
1/2 cup dates, chopped
2 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup almonds, ground
4 eggs, hard boiled, and chopped
3 tablespoons butter
1 pound Puff Pastry

Child: Squeeze the lemon juice and place it in a large bowl. Measure 2 tablespoons butter or oil and place in a large skillet. Set it aside. Measure the dates and place them in a small bowl. Measure the almonds, and place in another small bowl. Combine the honey and cinnamon together in another small bowl.

Adult: Rinse the apples. Peel and core them. Thinly slice with a sharp knife or with a mandolin (a kitchen gadget used to slice vegetables and fruits). Place the apples in the bowl with the lemon juice and mix well. Slice the onion, with a sharp knife or with the mandolin, and place it aside. Remove the puff pastry from the refrigerator and set aside. Set the oven on to 350 F.

Child: Coat the bottom and sides of a 9 inch round baking dish, and set it aside.

Adult: Show the child how to chop the eggs with a fork. After the eggs are chopped, refrigerate.

Adult: Heat the butter in the skillet. Add the onion and saute for 5 minutes, until golden. Add the apples, and saute for another 20 minutes, until tender. Add in the dates and the honey-cinnamon mixture. Stir well. Remove from the heat and let cool. Arrange puff pastry in the prepared pie pan. Pour half of the apple mixture over the pastry.

Child: Spread the mixture evenly. Next make a layer of almonds evenly over the apple mixture, then chopped eggs, then remaining apple mixture. Place the remaining pieces of butter on top.

Adult: Cover the pie with remaining dough.

Child: Prick the top of the pie with a fork.

Adult: Place the pie in the oven, bake for 30 minutes, or until the crust is golden in color. Remove from the oven and let it cool for about 15 minutes before serving it.

It serves about 6. Serve with a fresh, green salad.

Thank you Grandma Maria Campos, and Papa. Happy Summer Everyone!

Sandra N. Allen

Dear Reader

Having a teenager around the house has taught me two important lessons. The first is that as children reach their teen years and begin to experiment with independence, the first thing to go is their attention to their parents' advice and information.

The second thing I've learned is that it's a very good idea to have established a loving relationship with that child in the early years because that's the only lever parents have when faced with a towering adolescent son, or an "I'm an adult now" adolescent daughter.

That warm parent-child bond is the reason our children ultimately listen to what we have to say. The love and connection between parent and child enables our words to carry weight and importance.

Which brings us to this month's feature: Family Rituals. William Doherty, Ph.D. writes about the importance of these regular, dependable family activities as the basis for loving bonds. It will change the way you think about Sunday dinners and those nightly bedtime routines.

What are some other people's family rituals? Read Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour's interview with adults about the special activities of their childhood and what it meant (and means) to them.

Sandra Allen gives us another perspective on the importance of cooking together as a family and a special recipe.

This summer why not start family traditions of your own? Make some memories with your youngsters.

Neala Schwartzberg

library resources

Hitting the Road

Books for Adults

📖 ***Run on the Run: Travel games and songs*** by Joanna Cole and Stephanie Calmenson; illustrated by Alan Teigreen; Beech Tree Books, an imprint of William Morrow & Co.; New York, 1999; Softcover, $6.95. Although aimed at older children who can read the book themselves, parents will find a lot of useful games and activities to keep their little ones amused. There are word games, but also guessing games (e.g. How long to the next town?), traditional car games (e.g. travel bingo, I spy), license plate games (e.g. find the letters of the alphabet in order), and more.

📖 ***Trouble-free Travel with Children*** by Vicki Lansky; Book Peddlers; Deephaven, MN, 1996; Paperback, $8.95. If your family is considering traveling, remember that the key is careful planning combined with flexibility. You may fondly remember the days of just picking up and heading out, but that won't work when little ones come along. This book is filled with hints, tips, and things to consider such as packing, entertaining kids en route, adapting motel rooms to your family's needs, and eating out.

Books for Children

There are all kinds of books to take with you to entertain your youngster. Here are some that have a travel-related theme.

📖 ***Are We There Yet, Daddy?*** by Virginia Walters; illustrated by S. D. Schindler; Viking Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. Of all the questions that strike fear into parents, "Are we there yet" must top the list (or tied with "Will there be a bathroom soon?"). Combining a map with a story of a young boy's ride to Grandma's house, this format will amuse children as they follow the car's progress and will help teach logic and map reading skills.

📖 ***Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea*** by Vera B. Williams and Jennifer Williams; Mulberry Books, 1999; Paperback, $4.95. The story of Stringbean and his trip with his brother Fred from Kansas to the Pacific Ocean is told through a series of postcards and photographs (okay, drawings that are supposed to be photographs). It is quirky and charming and makes long car trips fun.

📖 ***Traffic Jam!***; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1999; Fold-out, $5.95. A parent's worst nightmare, a traffic jam, becomes the premise of this sturdy, fold-out book. It won't make the traffic move faster, but it will provide a bit of fun.

📖 ***When We Get Home*** by Robin Ballard; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. A young child and her mother have just helped grandma move to a new house. Now, they are on their way back home. The little girl thinks about what will happen when they get there. The anticipation of the comforting routine helps make the trip easier.

Families Are Fun

📖 ***Alligator Baby*** by Robert Munsch; illustrated by Michael Martchenko; Scholastic Inc.; New York, 1997; Softcover, $3.99. When Kristen's mother was having a baby, the family got a bit lost. Instead of driving to the hospital, they drove to the zoo. Unfortunately, instead of bringing home a people baby they brought home an alligator baby, and then a seal baby. Finally, Kristen goes off to the zoo and brings home the right baby.

📖 ***Cherry Pies and Lullabies*** by Lyunn Reiser; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. A book about family customs handed from one generation to another told in simple words. Great-grandmothers bake cherry pies, make flower crowns, quilts, and sing lullabies and pass this tradition on to their children and further.

📖 ***Dinosaur Bob*** by William Joyce; HarperFestival; New York, 1998; Boardbook, $6.95. A short but wonderfully silly book about a family who travels to find a dinosaur and then brings him home.

📖 ***Paddington Bear*** by Michael Bond; Pictures by R. W. Alley; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $12.95. For those adults and children who love Paddington Bear and wonder how he found his way to the Brown family, here's the answer. "Mr. and Mrs. Brown first met Paddington on a railway platform. In fact, that was how he came to have such an unusual name for a bear, because Paddington was the name of the station." This is the beginning of it all, the story reissued on Paddington's 40th birthday.

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Ritos y Tradiciones Familiares
Los Eventos que Mantienen a las Familias Unidas

¿Cuales son sus recuerdos favoritos de la infancia? ¿Los cuentos de todas las noches? ¿Las vacaciones familiares? ¿La comida del sábado (Sabbath)? Sus peores recuerdos pueden también estar relacionados con estos ritos familiares, pero resulta que estos ritos familiares son el vínculo que mantiene a las familias unidas.

¿Qué son los ritos familiares? ¿Y qué se necesita para convertir una hábito de familia en un rito familiar?

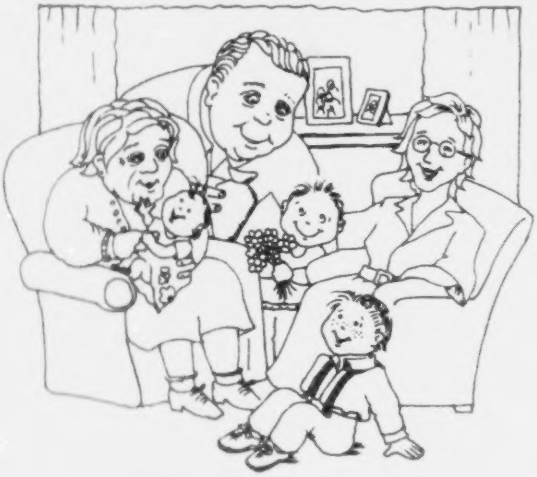
Son actividades que tienen significado e importancia. Una actividad se convierte en rito cuando es importante, repetido, y coordinado. Por ejemplo, para la mayoría de las familias bañarse y arreglarse son rutinas, porque a pesar de ser repetidas y coordinadas, no tienen importancia simbólica. Pero si Ud. convierte el baño diario de su niño en un momento de relajación y de agrado para vincularse con su hijo, la rutina se convierte en rito.

Para ser rito, la actividad también debe ser repetitiva. Un viaje ocasional y sin preparación a una casa de campo no es un rito, mientras que un viaje anual que se espera con ansiedad lo sería.

Finalmente, un rito debe ser coordinado. Una cena preparada y comida por cada persona por separado no se podría considerar un rito familiar, mientras que una en que todos comen juntos premeditadamente, es un rito familiar si se lleva a cabo regularmente y está inspirada de significado para la familia.

Para que Tener Ritos Familiares?

En un mundo en que frecuentemente estamos aislados, los ritos familiares nos dan vínculos con otros, un sentido de identidad y una percepción de valores. Nos dan una previsibilidad que nos entrega seguridad, y la sensación de regularidad y orden. Saber que el padre le conversará a su niño y le leerá un cuento todas las noches convierte la hora de acostarse en algo que se espera con ansias y que se goza. Si hubiese que negociar todas las noches las conversaciones nocturnas, no habría previsibilidad y el rito perdería su poder.



Los ritos familiares nos dan una sensación de vínculo. El rito del baño nocturno puede ser el momento principal de una relación uno a uno entre padre e hijo. Los viajes a ver a los abuelos dan el nexo en la relación entre abuelo y nieto. La cena familiar es el lugar para contar cuentos de familia. Estos nos permite vincularnos entre si de una manera llena de significado.

Los ritos familiares nos conceden una identidad como miembros de la familia, una sensación de quien pertenece a la familia y qué lo que es especial en esa familia. Uno puede

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saber quienes son los miembros principales por los que son invitados a la cena de Acción de Gracias; incluso los no parientes en estos ritos se convierten en "familia". Las familias que van juntas en vacaciones interesantes adquieren esta auto imagen de una familia que le gusta divertirse. Dicen, "Somos personas que nos gusta acampar" o "Somos personas que nos gusta caminar en el campo".

Los ritos familiares nos conceden una manera de establecer valores. Nos ayudan a demostrar lo que creemos y apreciamos. Los ritos religiosos son un buen ejemplo, como cuando una familia se ofrece colectivamente de voluntarios para trabajar en la comunidad, o que esperan que los niños vayan a visitar regularmente a sus abuelos en una casa de reposo, ya que es importante honrar y apoyar a los miembros más ancianos de la familia.

Quien Está Involucrado?

Por definición los ritos familiares involucran a más de un miembro de la familia. Pero no todos los ritos familiares necesariamente involucran a toda la familia. Algunos solo involucran solo dos miembros: una pareja casada que salen a cenar, o un padre leyéndole a un niño. Algunos involucran sub-grupos, como cuando mi padre me llevaba a mi y a mi hermana a los partidos de béisbol de los Philadelphia Phillies. Los ritos pueden involucrar a la familia ampliada mas grande, en reuniones familiares y ritos durante los días feriados. Otras tradiciones involucran amigos íntimos de la familia, o incluso a una comunidad como la iglesia o sinagoga, o a grupos voluntarios que apoyan el museo infantil local. Es importante acordarse de que pueden haber distintas combinaciones de participantes en los ritos familiares.

Tipos de Ritos Familiares

A mi me gusta clasificar los ritos familiares de acuerdo a la función que desempeñan para las familias, y las necesidades que satisfacen. Por lo tanto, hay ritos para vincularse o cohesionarse, ritos para demostrar amor a miembros específicos de la familia, y ritos que unen a la familia a la comunidad.

Los ritos de vinculación dan la oportunidad para que la familia se cohesione. Las comidas y viajes familiares lejos de casa, que pueden ser viajes a la heladería y a largas vacaciones que alientan la construcción de nexos entre miembros de la familia. También existen pequeños ritos cotidianos: levantarse en la mañana; acostarse en la noche; y todo las idas y venidas de los miembros de la familia hacia y desde el trabajo, jardín infantil, y colegio.

Los ritos de amor desarrollan una intimidad de uno a uno y hacen a los miembros individuales de la familia sentirse especiales.
Los ritos de amor de pareja pueden ser los aniversarios, la celebración del Día de los Enamorados, o salir juntos. Los ritos de personas especiales pueden involucrar a adulto o niños y generalmente se centran alrededor de los cumpleaños, el Día de la Madre o el Día del Padre.

Los ritos con la comunidad tienen una dimensión pública y puede involucrar esfuerzos conscientes para conectarse con una red social más amplia que la familia. Estos pueden incluir importantes eventos familiares y transiciones como los nacimientos, matrimonios y funerales, y también todas las actividades religiosas en comunidades de fe.Finalmente, los ritos de los días feriados como el Día de Acción de Gracias y la Navidad han evolucionado a una categoría especial de rito familiar que involucra las tres funciones de los ritos: conexión, amor, y comunidad. Estos son los grandes ritos del calendario del año para la mayoría de las familias norteamericanas, ya sean Cristianas o no Cristianas.

Ritos en Distintos Tipos de Familia

No existe una regla general para medir las tradiciones familiares de nuestras diversas familias contemporáneas. Las familias que se han casado por segunda vez tendrán distintas necesidades que las que se han casado por primera vez. Las familias con un solo jefe de familia serán distintas a las de dos padres. Distintas tradiciones étnicas esperaran distintos grados de flexibilidad o estructura en sus ritos familiares. Algunas familias están estrechamente vinculadas a sus orígenes étnicos y a la familia ampliada, y otras están menos involucradas. Las familias que están experimentando períodos de tranquilidad se sentirán más libres para ser más innovadores con sus ritos, mientras que otras que atraviesan periodos de mucho estrés necesitan mantener lo que tienen. No hay ninguna fórmula para toda esta diversidad, pero en el centro de cada familia deben haber ritos de conexión, amor, y comunidad.

Encontrando Tiempo Para los Ritos

¿Cómo podemos darle más intencionalidad a nuestros ritos familiares en vista de la falta de tiempo que la mayoría de nosotros enfrenta? ¿Qué si uno ya se siente abrumado? ¿Pensar sobre mejorar los ritos de su familia lo hará sentirse incluso más abrumado? Yo planteo dos estrategias generales.

Lo primero es hacer mejor uso del tiempo que ya le dedica a las actividades familiares. Ud. ya tiene que alimentar a sus niños, por lo tanto empiece mejorando la calidad de esas cenas, sin alargarlas. Haga que la cena (almuerzo o desayuno) sea un momento en que toda la familia coma junta y cuente algo sobre su día.

Ud. tiene que acostar a sus niños. Trate de que sea más premeditado y planificado. Léale en voz alta a su niño o cántele una canción de cuna. Ud. seguramente celebra cumpleaños, fiestas, o numerosas otras actividades familiares. Ud. puede tratar de mejorar su calidad en vez de aumentar su número o su tiempo.

La segunda estrategia general es experimentar con quitarle tiempo a otra actividad a la cual Ud. le dedica más tiempo de lo necesario. Este es el momento de controlar la tecnología. El norteamericano promedio se pasa más de cuatro horas mirando televisión, o la mitad de nuestro tiempo que no está dedicado al sueño o al trabajo. Ciertamente ahí hay tiempo que se puede recortar para dedicárselo a los ritos familiares.

Creando y Cambiando Ritos

Supongamos que Ud. ha conseguido tiempo para ritos familiares, ¿como se pueden instaurar nuevos ritos, o convertir hábitos existentes en ritos? Haga algo una vez sin mayor comentario y después pregúnteles a otros miembros de la familia si es que le gusto o si le gustaría hacerlo otra vez. Ud. podría decir, "Por qué no hacemos algo distinto esta vez"? Si a los miembros de la familia le gustó la nueva experiencia quizás quieran continuarla. Yo hice esto una vez con mi señora e hijos cuando propuse durante la Navidad que en la cena de Navidad cada uno expresara su aprecio a los otros miembros de la familia. Lo propuse unos pocos días antes de Navidad para que todos pudieran pensar sobre lo que les gustaría decir. Nadie tuvo ninguna objeción. Durante la cena tuvimos un bello intercambio de cariño, un verdadero momento de intimidad familiar. Y este intercambio se convirtió en un rito Navideño permanente.

Convierta una rutina en un rito dándole trascendencia. Después de haberme mudado a Minnesota en 1986, my familia empezó a frecuentar el Restaurante Davanni a comer pizza. Después de varios meses de ir todos los viernes en la noche, nos empezamos a dar cuenta que estaba empezando una tradición familiar, y decidimos conjuntamente a comprometernos a seguir yendo como un rito de conexión –un momento para una conversación de familia distinta, mientras disfrutábamos de comida que a todos nos gustaba. Incluso ahora, cuando mis hijos tienen más de veinte años, dan la señal que quieren tiempo con la familia llamando por teléfono para sugerir que comamos pizza en el Restaurante Davanni.

Negocie un nuevo rito o cambie uno existente. Sugiera su idea en un momento tranquilo y sin crítica. Ud. puede decir que está sintiendo la necesidad de un cambio en como la familia come su cena o lleva a cabo su rito de cena existente. Describa qué es lo que le falta y que es lo que quiere probar.

Por ejemplo, quizás Ud. quiera apagar el televisor durante la cena y, quizás, encender una vela en la mesa. Si los otros miembros de la familia están dispuestos, pueden intentar esto por un tiempo. Puede que requiera un poco de tiempo acostumbrarse a este nuevo rito, así que tenga paciencia, y esté dispuesto a hacer ajustes y componendas razonables que no traicionen el objetivo del rito.

Manejo de los Ritos Familiares en el Tiempo

Una vez que se tienen buenas tradiciones familiares, mantenerlas vivas requiere tiempo y celo. He aquí un resumen de los principios primordiales que he desarrollado para manejar los ritos familiares en el tiempo: Acuerdo entre adultos. Si Ud. y su pareja o compañero no están de acuerdo sobre el rito, este no funcionará bien. Dése el tiempo para negociar las necesidades, valores, y metas de sus ritos familiares con su compañero adulto. Si no es así, Ud. será demasiado responsable para que los ritos funcionen.

Eventualmente a los niños les tiene que gustar. Un rito que funciona bien a la larga obtendrá el apoyo de los niños. Pero si se siguen quejando y resistiendo, considere cambiar, substituir o deshacerse del rito.

Maximizar la participación. Entre más involucrados estén los miembros de la familia en la planificación y realización del rito existe más posibilidad que este transcienda.

Tenga expectativas claras. Los ritos de todo tipo requieren suficiente coordinación para que la gente sepa que debe hacer y cuando hacerlo.

Minimice conflictos. A pesar que los desacuerdos siempre pueden surgir en las familias, los ritos más exitosos ocurren sin tensión o conflictos frecuentes.

Proteja los ritos de la erosión. La falta de tiempo y energía amenazan a todos los ritos familiares, lo que lo hace muy difícil ser consistente y nos tienta a recortarlos. Pero proteger los ritos buenos vale la pena.

Esté abierto al cambio. Puede parecer una contradicción, pero las tradiciones tienen su temporada para plantar, cultivar y podar. Las familias están siempre cambiando mientras mantienen sus tradiciones más importantes.

La mayoría de las familias tienen algunos ritos que disfrutan, otros que no disfrutan pero que con los cuales se sienten atrapados, y algunos que podrían beneficiarse de nueva creatividad o remodelación. Piense sobre cualquier rito que Ud. quisiera remodelar, y de nuevos ritos que le gustaría probar. Los beneficios para su familia pueden ser enormes.

William J. Doherty, Ph.D., es profesor de Ciencias Sociales de la Familia en la Universidad de Minnesota, y ejerce como terapeuta familiar. Es autor de The Intentional Family: Simple Rituals to Strengthen Family Ties (Avon, 1999); y Take Back Your Kids: Confident Parenting in Turbulent Time (Sorin Books, March, 2000)

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp
Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

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Playing
Our Children's Job

Have you ever heard someone say "All those kids do is play!" as if playing was a waste of time? Actually, play is anything but a sad misuse of opportunity, rather it is the way children learn – through touching, moving, and experimenting.

Imagine you came across what appeared to be a sealed wooden box. What would you do? Look at it closely? Run your fingers around it looking for catches, handles, buttons? Shake it? Begin pressing at different places seeking hidden springs. You might even pry up corners. You would, in short, try out your whole repertoire of responses for "what to do with unfamiliar objects."

Now, consider what your baby does when she sees something new. She tries all her own tricks, learned from investigating other new objects. Depending on her age, she might first put it in her mouth as a way to explore. Maybe she'd shake it. Or poke at it. Perhaps she'd swat at things with it. Suppose the object of her exploration was a hollow tube. And suppose you showed her to look through it with one eye closed, or to hold it to her lips and make a tooting sound. She would have learned two new ways to interact with unfamiliar items and explore their possibilities. Next time she encountered an object with any kind of hole, she'd probably try to look through it, or hold it to her lips and make noises. All this is learning – learning through play.

As children get older their play changes. A toddler will use a wooden kitchen spoon as an object to bang with, banging on almost everything in sight. But, as children master many of these early ways of playing and interacting with objects, their play changes and with it their choice of materials. No longer content with a random assortment of spoons, pots and hollow tubes, our children are ready for toys and games. But the learning still continues. As it will throughout their lifetimes.

Building Blocks and Playdough

Building blocks and playdough help children develop fine motor skills. Children are not born with the ability to control the small muscles in their fingers and hands. The process does begin early, when infants and toddlers reach for and grasp objects, but development and coordination of wrist and finger muscles – necessary for later writing – come slowly and require lots of practice.

Playdough, clay, and building blocks (such as Lego type blocks) encourage strength and dexterity. Simply through pinching, rolling, and shaping playdough children develop these muscles. Connecting building blocks develops hand muscles and the pincer grasp – the touching of thumb and fingers that is important for holding pens, pencils, silverware, and tooth brushes.

Playdough and building blocks are also open-ended materials that allow children to creatively explore. A wind-up doll can only be wound up and let loose to walk around, while the child sits and watches. But children can experiment with playdough and blocks however they choose. One day blocks can be an airplane, the next day a sofa. Children can create vehicles, and houses, even entire towns. Their play is limited only by their imagination and not by the material itself.

LEARNING SUMMIT
LEARNING LOOKOUT
EDUCATION EDGE
NEW LEARNING VISTAS

Puzzle Power

Puzzles help young children develop eye-hand coordination. Learning to control their hands and fingers is a coordination skill that also helps children in their early attempts at writing.

Three- or four-piece wooden puzzles, in which each piece fits into

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its own unique hole, are usually the first type of puzzle given to toddlers. As children mature and advance in their abilities to rotate pieces to match holes and find pieces that fit, they can handle increasingly complex puzzles.

Puzzles also encourage thinking skills and problem-solving. When children learn how to do these puzzles (often with parental help) they develop a logical way to put the pieces together. Rather than taking a hit-or-miss approach, picking up pieces randomly and trying to force them together, children learn to start with corner pieces. Look for edges. They seek out the colors which are needed in the piece to match it to the ones they already have. They begin to put together a piece with blue for the sky and a bit of green on the bottom with similar pieces.

Homemade puzzles are fun to make and fun to play with. Appealing pictures, from magazines or postcards, can be mounted on cardboard and cut up into puzzles. Look for pictures on topics of special interest to your child. Children who are developing the ability to use safety scissors, under parental supervision, can also create their own puzzles.

The Play-Full Prop Box

What would childhood be without pretend play? It gives children a chance to go beyond the confines of the real world and into one they can tailor to their own interests. Children can go anywhere and be anyone through the power of their imagination.

Not only does it expand children's horizons, and stimulate their creativity, it also stretches their cognitive skills. To pretend, children must be able to recall experiences and then recreate them. What is it like to run a store? Be a baker? To imagine, they must be able to picture experiences in their minds and create scenarios and narratives out of the bits and pieces of their memories. Then, they can go even further. What is it like to be an astronaut? What could we eat if we're stranded on a desert island? Where would we sleep?

Children like to try on different roles and activities. One day a child may act out going to the grocery store: making a list; gathering items; paying at the check out counter. Another day that child may pretend to be a dentist or a fire fighter. Or go fishing.

One way to encourage dramatic play -- pretend experiences that enhance your child's cognitive abilities and encourage creative thinking and problem solving – is through the use of prop boxes or bags.

A day-at-the-beach theme box can hold beach towels, old swimsuits, flip-flops, empty suntan lotion containers, sunglasses, maybe even some sea shells. A rolling pin, cookie cutters, playdough, pans, spoons, dishtowels can become the props for a bakery setting.

In fact, creating the prop box can become part of the fun. Sit down with your youngster and decide the themes he'd like to have, then begin to assemble the equipment. Once you've made them up, clearly label the containers, perhaps with pictures and words, and store them where your child can reach them. As your child's interests change, make new collections. When friends come over, they can decide who they want to be, where, and begin the dramatic play.

The Importance of Play

Play of all kinds encourages language development and social skills. When kids play together they are playing with equals and they must learn to express their feelings and ideas – and work out their differences (even if it sometimes takes a bit of help from a supervising adult). The concept of "fair" takes on real meaning when one child refuses to give up the ball, or jump rope. Organized sports come with their own rules, but the games and scenarios children make up and play among themselves are often created as they go along. The rules are invented, refined, and established through discussion and negotiation.

Play also builds and encourages your child's interests. If your child is fascinated by dinosaurs, playdough offers hours of modeling activity. She can build new "prehistoric" creatures with building sets.Learn about them through books and videos. Even create new ones through craft materials.

Is your child a budding artist? He can explore the unique aspects of different art materials. Learn about color mixing. Explore textures created by household materials.

Seasonal and holiday themes are wonderful fun for children. Fold up white paper and snip away to make snow flakes. Create a "what I'm grateful for" collage for Thanksgiving.

Play deepens children's engagement with literature. What is her favorite story? She can build the enchanted castle. In short, play gives your child a way to explore, even experience her interests.

Process and Product

Adults are often concerned with the outcomes, the products of our efforts. We want the report to look nice, the cookies to taste great, or the flowers to be planted in rows.

In part this is because we no longer need to learn how to do these activities. But think back to when you first learned how to play baseball or use a new computer program. In the beginning you needed to have time for "messing around," exploring what happens if you did this or that. How hard do I need to hit the ball? What happens when I click on that computer icon? In fact, some of our frustration with these "learning" experiences is the result of being focused on the product and not the process. We don't want to go through the playing part. We want to go directly to the successful outcome.

Luckily, children enjoy the process: the playing part. They are learning new things all the time, and they need the freedom to try them out without worrying about how well the product turns out. Whether you can recognize their drawing of a tree, or how they've assembled the blocks doesn't matter. They are more fascinated by the process – the way finger paint squishes across the paper, the way the blocks tumble when the tower falls over, how they can cut odd shapes (with special safety scissors) rather than neatly snip along the dotted line. That's why your child can draw all afternoon yet still not be able to tell you what he drew. And why one child can pour rice back and forth between pitchers, and another will string and unstring beads without getting bored. They are learning how to do it, and finding that learning is fun and fascinating.

It can be hard for adults to look beyond the product of an activity and see what the child is learning from the process. Perhaps she's learning coordination or beginning writing skills, or making discoveries about triangles, or gravity. Whatever it is, she's certainly finding out that doing for one's self is very satisfying – and that builds confidence.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. is the editor of "Parent & preschooler Newsletter." Some of the material in this article is based on information provided by the National Association for the Education of Young Children; Washington, D.C.

Free From the American Toy Institute, Inc.

"Fun Play, Safe Play"; *19-page booklet focusing on the importance of play and guidelines for selecting safe and appropriate toys. This booklet also comes in Spanish.*

"Guide to Toys for Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired"; *a listing and description of toys selected by the American Foundation for the Blind for their interest to children who are blind or visually impaired. Of course, there are many more on the market that are appropriate for these youngsters so the booklet also contains guidelines to select additional toys.*

- ***To receive a free copy of these booklets call:***

1 800 851-9955

- *The American Toy Institute is the educational subsidiary of Toy Manufacturers of America, Inc. The TMA also maintains a toll-free toy safety hotline at 1 877 4 TOY SAFETY*

Lekotek Toy Resource Helpline

Lekotek (loosely translated from Swedish as play library) provides toll-free help in selecting appropriate toys and play materials for children with disabilities.

☞ Call the Lekotek Toy Resource Helpline available Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (Central Time) to talk to a trained expert on toys, play and creative play ideas for children with disabilities. The Lekotek Leaders also have a resource library of toy catalogues and resource guides. Toll free number:

1 800 366-PLAY

Dear Reader

Maddy is five months old. Her aunt brought her to my office a few days ago to meet me. I'm one of those people who spot a baby and become instantly transformed. I make funny faces and silly noises, and care not one bit about any sense of dignity. Frankly, I'd rather have a baby smile at me.

My office is filled with children's books, and I offered some of my favorites to Maddy to enjoy. She cared for none of them. All she wanted to do was to stand on my lap, keeping her aunt in view at all times, and play with my door knob. So, I decided to show her a new trick. I am, after all, the woman who proudly taught her infant son to stick out his tongue. There is very little a tiny baby can do, and he was most gratified at the reaction to his new trick. He tried it out on everyone, his father, his grandparents, even his pediatrician.

I showed Maddy that when I push in the lock of the door it springs out by itself. Few adults find this of great interest. But Maddy was fascinated. After I did it several times, I stopped. There was a pause, then she grabbed my finger and raised it to the lock. I obediently pushed it in and let it out a few times. Then waited to see what she'd do. Once again, she grabbed my finger. After a few times, she decided to try it herself. Maddy had learned a new way to interact with the objects around her.

So this month we feature "play." It's been said that play is the work of childhood. It's not only fun, but it's the best way to learn, for both children and adults. If you doubt that, think about the popularity of hands-on science museums. Think about the attraction of computers – playing with that operating system, hooking up new equipment. Think about baking – changing and adjusting the recipes. Think about cars. Know anyone who likes to "tinker" with them? Oh, adults play, but it seems so frivolous we just don't like to think that's what we're doing.

For much of the country, summer means being outdoors. But, sun can be harmful. Read Claudia Domb's column in the Health Corner on protecting your child's skin. The "Kids and Cars" box is based on Anara Guard's research and information.

This is our combined summer issue, so we added back-to-school information and books.

See you in September!

Neala Schwartzberg

THE HEALTH CORNER

Skin and Sun Safety

There has been much discussion in the media about the harmful effects of sun on skin, but unfortunately people still equate a deep, dark tan with health and beauty. If you were to check out the beaches on a sunny day, you would see many people working hard on their tans with little thought given to the fact that sun exposure might lead to wrinkles, age spots, or skin cancer. It is up to us to model sun-smart behavior, while reminding our children that a tan is not a sign of good health or fitness, but of skin injury.

How can basking in the sun's rays on a beautiful day feel so good yet be so harmful? The ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun cause injury to the skin and play a significant role in the development of skin cancer. Diagnosed cases of skin cancer is on the rise, with 1 million cases diagnosed annually. Risk factors include skin type, where you live, history of blistering sunburns, presence of atypical moles, and family history. Children are at increased risk for burns because of the amount of time they spend outdoors. According to the Journal of Pediatric Health (May/June, 1999), "Most people receive 80% of their lifetime exposure to sun by the time they are 18 to 21 years of age." As few as two blistering sunburns sustained as a child or teen increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. That is why protection is essential in the early years.

A sunburn is like any other kind of burn, except that it develops more slowly. We must protect our children from a sunburn the same as we ensure that he or she is not exposed to a hot stove. The degree of injury due to UV rays varies from mildly reddish skin to painful blisters accompanied by chills, fever, nausea, or dehydration. The sun can also cause pain and irritation to the eyes, and damage to the retina of the eye, which can cause visual difficulties.

Knowing the risks, we would be negligent if we didn't protect our children from the immediate and long-term effects of sun exposure. The American Academy of Pediatrics, in their Policy Statement of August 1999, refers to a study that estimates that sun avoidance could reduce the number of the most common type of skin cancer by 80%. The following are ways in which you can provide protection from the ill effects of the sun:

☼ **Avoid exposure**: Special precautions need to be taken for infants, especially for those under the age of six months. They should be kept out of direct sunlight, as they are especially vulnerable to sunburn, dehydration, and the life threatening effects of sunstroke. Infants cannot regulate their internal temperature by sweating because this mechanism is not yet functional. Babies should be kept in shaded areas. Plenty of fluids should be given to ensure good hydration. Outdoor time for all children should be carefully monitored and extra protection provided between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM.

☼ **Clothing**: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children wear lightweight clothing and hats that cover and shade the skin. Long sleeves and pants made of tight weave cotton provide the best protection. Wide brim hats that shade the face and ears are best. Sunglasses, even for infants, should be used to protect the eyes from the risks of sun damage.

☼ **Sunscreen**: There is controversy as to whether or not sunscreens should be used on infants under the age of six months. Until recently, the medical community believed that putting sunscreen on a baby was not an option. In the most current literature, the American Academy of Pediatrics states, "For babies under six months of age, sunscreen may be used on small areas of the body such as the face and back of the hands if adequate clothing and shade are not available." If you are considering using it on your baby, check with your pediatrician.

When choosing a sunscreen, make sure that it is of "broad spectrum," meaning that it will screen out both ultraviolet B (UVB) and ultraviolet A (UVA) rays. The lotion should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and be water-resistant or waterproof.

Test a small amount of sunscreen before use to make sure that your child is not sensitive to it. When applying, avoid areas around the eyes, making sure to cover all other exposed areas. Put it on 30 minutes before going outdoors and reapply at least every two hours thereafter. Be generous with the amount of lotion applied and pay special attention to the nose, cheeks, shoulders, and tops of ears. Zinc oxide provides excellent protection and can be used as an extra safeguard in intense sunlight.

If your child does get a sunburn, avoid further exposure. Cool compresses may help ease the pain. Immediate medical attention is necessary if your infant under the age of one year gets sunburned, or if your child shows signs of dehydration or heatstroke. Always contact your pediatrician if your child has blistering, pain, or fever.

Make sun protection part of your family's routine. You can be your child's best teacher by employing sun-smart practices yourself.

Claudia Domb, RN, BA is an elementary school nurse and consultant/trainer to child care facilities. She is a former Director of Health in Child Care for a chain of day care centers and member of the Medical Advisory Committee of the Child Care Council of Nassau County.

Kids and Cars
the Heat Stroke Danger

There probably isn't a parent who, at one time or another, hadn't left a youngster in a car. Just for a minute. Only to get something really quickly from the store. Maybe to protect them, we lock the car door so no one can break in and harm them.

"But, cars are not babysitters. They are not safe or appropriate places to leave children," notes Anara Guard whose research findings on heat stroke deaths of children in closed motor vehicles was just presented to the Pediatric Academic Societies/ American Academy of Pediatrics meeting in Boston. And, she adds, "Lock your vehicles so that children cannot gain access to them."

Ms. Guard identified a total of 99 deaths among children four years of age or younger. In 1/3 of the cases, the children managed to get into the car on their own. This happened when parents were distracted by other children, or family events, or were sleeping. Another 1/3 involved caregivers knowingly leaving the child in the vehicle, often because the youngster was asleep and the caretaker didn't want to wake up the child. The remaining 1/3 happened because the child was simply forgotten. Sometimes this involved drug and alcohol use on the part of the caretaker.

To avoid tragedy remember:

- Keep cars locked when not in use. Young children can't get into locked cars.
- Don't leave young children, not just infants, in cars. Especially not in summer.
- When a toddler goes missing, check the car first.
- Remember: it can take only a few minutes of heat exposure to cause harm to a young child.

Anara Guard spent 6 years with the Children's Safety Network National Injury & Violence Prevention Resource Center. She is now the Director of Safety Information at www.safetytips.com

HUG O'WAR

I will not play at tug o'war.
I'd rather play at hug o' war.
Where everyone hugs
Instead of tugs,
Where everyone giggles
And rolls on the rug.
Where everyone kisses,
And everyone grins,
And everyone cuddles,
And everyone wins.

"Hug o'War" Reprinted with permission; *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein; HarperCollins *Publishers*; Copyright © 1974 Evil Eye Music, Inc.

For Adults

🕮 ***I Saw a Purple Cow and 100 other recipes for learning*** by Ann Cole, Carolyn Haas, Faith Bushnell, and Betty Weinberger; illustrated by True Kelley; Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1972; Softcover, $10.95. This book may not be new, but the activities are fun and the step-by-step instructions make it easy to do. They are coded into categories such as "sick in bed" and "math readiness" and include pretending, creating, crafts, music and rhythm, and more. Much of the fun of these projects is in the making – the rhythm band describes how to make a comb kazoo, a humming flute and a drum. Make a Kitchen Garden encourages children to use sweet potatoes, carrot tops and fruit seeds to create a garden.

Fun Stuff for Summer Days and Nights

Summer is here and the living is easy: hot, sun-drenched days melting into balmy, magical evenings. This is the time to enjoy family and friends. This is also a wonderful season to plan some great activities to share with your children. Here are a few very special activities some of our friends have shared with us.

Starry Night: On a clear, summer evening, lay a blanket out on the grass or a rooftop. Lay with your child on the blanket and watch the sky. Talk about the stars, the moon, and clouds that drift by. You may find that the conversation will move to other subjects. Go with it - this starry night's adventure could become a wonderful family tradition.

Summer Birthdays: How about a camp-out birthday party? Pitch a tent in the backyard or on a rooftop and invite a few of your child's friends. Dinner can be hamburgers on the grill, the birthday cake, and hot chocolate just before bedtime. Be sure to have some adults on hand for the light sleepers or "scary" moments during the night!

Camera Day: Take a walk with your child. Give him a disposable camera and allow him to photograph whatever catches his fancy. After the photos are developed, mount them in a scrapbook - one photo per page. Talk about what he was thinking when he took each photo. Then you can help him write a story for each photo.

Map Making Day: On another walk, encourage your child to notice everything around her. Ask her to describe every landmark, street, or pathway she passes. Then sit together and draw a map of your walk marking special trees, brooks, stores, or houses.

Other Notes: Remember - local libraries have summer story hours, public pools have water-safety classes, and museums have special children's tours. With a little effort, parents can provide some great summer activities that create memories to last a lifetime.

Books for Back to School

🕮 ***At Preschool with Teddy Bear*** by Jacqueline McQuade; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1999; Board book, $5.95. What will it be like at preschool? This gentle book describes Teddy's school day.

🕮 ***Billy and the Big New School*** by Catherine & Laurence Anholt; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. "Billy was starting at a new school. It was very exciting, but it made him feel a little funny inside." But Billy, like the little bird he finds, learns it's okay to go out into the world.

🕮 ***Busy Preschool*** by Jo Lodge; Dial Books; New York, 1999; Pop-up, $9.99. The animal children are at school. Charlie Croc is riding his bike, Danny Dog is playing the piano and the other animals are having a busy morning. The book opens up into different areas with pull tabs to animate the characters.

🕮 ***Day Care Days*** by Mary Brigid Barret; illustrated by Patti Beling Murphy; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover, $12.95. One of the few books we've seen that introduces children to day care. The text and pictures convey the hustle and bustle involved in getting the family off to work and school, but it also infuses it with a sense of cooperation and love.

🕮 ***Minerva Louise at School*** by Janet Morgan Stoeke; Penguin Putnam, Inc.; New York, 1999; Softcover, $5.99. Minerva Louise, the mixed up hen, wanders into the school and mistakes it for a barn. Of course, she sees everything in terms of farm life: stalls and nesting boxes and more. A humorous introduction to school.

🕮 ***Off to School, Baby Duck!*** by Amy Hest; illustrated by Jill Barton; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover, $16.99. Another in the series of *Baby Duck* books, and as warm and endearing. Baby Duck is so nervous she couldn't eat her breakfast. And the walk with her family to school didn't make her feel any better. But who was waiting for her at the entrance? Her grandfather, who knew that she would be scared. Then she met her teacher, and made a new friend.

🕮 ***Pooh's First Day of School*** by Kathleen W. Zoehfeld; illustrated by Robbin Cuddy; Disney Press; New York, 1999; Softcover, $4.99. Pooh and his friends can't go to school like Christopher Robbin, but they aren't sure if that makes them happy or sad. So, Christopher sets up a mini-school for them. They enjoy it so much that he promises he'll conduct a play school for them everyday after he comes home from his real school.

🕮 ***Tom Goes to Kindergarten*** by Margaret Wild; illustrated by David Legge; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1999; Hardcover, $15.95. It's not often that starting-school books make the adult reader laugh. This book not only prepares little ones for their first day of school, but does it with good humor. Tom the Panda is going off to school. When he gets there, he decides that he doesn't want his parents to leave. So, for the first day, they agree to stay. But kindergarten is so much fun that the next day it's the parents who don't want to leave.

Your Child At Play

- **Birth to One Year:** Your baby is getting more efficient at tracking with her eyes and attending to different sounds. Let her practice these skills by moving a rattle at different speeds and in different directions as you sing this song:

Shake it high and shake it low.
Shake it fast and shake it slow.
Shake that rattle, follow that sound.
Shake that rattle, see what you found.
(Give baby the rattle)

Give your baby a hat that she can put on her head. Try the game with different kinds of hats, or even a bowl. Let your baby admire herself in the mirror.

Roll a toy car through a cardboard tube. See if your baby will watch for it to come out the other end.

- **One to Two Years:** Save your junk mail. Your toddler will keep busy pulling the inserts out of the envelopes and trying to put them back. Give him one or two pieces and say, "This is your letter." If he gets his own letters every day, he is apt to lose interest in yours.

Any version of hide and seek appeals to a toddler, as long as it is not difficult to find the person who is hiding. A blanket, whether on a bed or not, instantly creates a good hiding place. First the child hides in the blanket, then the parent takes a turn. It is always easy to recognize that big lump under the blanket.

- **Two to Three Years:** Two-year-olds don't like to do what they are told to do but they do like following directions, particularly if it is presented as a challenge. "Let's see how fast you can put all your toys in the bucket..."

Children resist dressing themselves because they enjoy both the social stimulation and the feeling of being waited on. Try to make learning how to dress a part of a social occasion as well. Take turns with dressing by first putting on the child's socks and then having him pull them up, always engineering the sharing so that the child finishes the task.

- **Three to Five Years:** Make a pile of leaves and jump into it with your child.

Make a skipping rope out of running water from a hose. Hold the hose low to begin with and gradually make it higher.

As your child gets dressed in the morning or puts away her toys, invent a silly poem and let her put in the rhyming word:

I wonder what you're going to do.
I think you will put on your —.
I see something over there.
I think it is your teddy —.

Excerpted from the series YOUR CHILD AT PLAY - Second Edition by Marilyn Segal, Ph.D. Second Edition Copyright © 1998 by Mailmain Family Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Newmarket Press, 18 East 48th Street, New York, NY 10017 (tel. 800-233-4830).

This series of books focuses on children's development. It's divided into: BIRTH TO ONE YEAR (discovering the senses and learning about the world); ONE TO TWO YEARS (exploring, learning, making friends and pretending); TWO TO THREE YEARS (growing up, language, and the imagination); THREE TO FIVE YEARS (conversations, creativity and learning letters, words, and numbers); and FIVE TO EIGHT YEARS (building friendships, expanding interests and resolving conflicts).

Back to School

In today's busy family, children are often in a nursery or pre-K school. This means that younger and younger children will be preparing for school during the summer months. How can parents help their children get ready?

☑ **Plan for the first day of school now**. The summer months are a good time to start helping your child learn to dress himself, eat on his own, and make small decisions about clothing and food. As a child does things for himself and makes his own decisions, he will feel more confident about this new adventure. "We spent many hours learning to tie shoelaces and button buttons but it sure did make a difference on the first day of school. Andy was confident and excited." reports his mother, Monica.

☑ **Remember that beginning school is an experience shared by the entire family** and not one that affects only your child. Children respond in many different ways to new beginnings. They may be fearful, irritable, or enthusiastic. They may become more demanding than usual. Parents need to respond to all of these feelings with a positive and helpful attitude. "My daughter started to become very 'clingy' as the time for school approached. I found that I was actually encouraging this behavior. I realized that Gina's 'growing up' was affecting me as much as it was affecting her. I was feeling a little abandoned too." says Ruth, Gina's mother.

☑ **New routines will need to be established**. A good time to practice these new routines is when the family is relaxed and not under pressure. During the summer months a family can designate a few mornings each week when they will practice all of the steps they will need to follow once school begins. Getting up, dressing, eating breakfast, preparing lunches, and catching the bus can all be gone over until everyone is comfortable.

☑ **How about setting aside a special time to just talk to your child** about the day's events? Parents will have less time with their child and will be less aware of the details of her day once school begins. Establishing a sharing time will help parents stay involved in her experiences and recognize when a she has problems or questions. "Once James started school, I actually made an 'appointment' for him in my schedule. When I came home each evening, we would sit together and talk about our day. I learned so much about him. I am still fascinated by the way he sees things and by his conclusions. These talks have become as important to me as they are to him." confides his father, Mike.

☑ **Be sure to visit the school during the summer.** More than one visit is even better. Encourage your child to talk to the teachers and ask questions. Make sure that she understands the answers and that she is clear about what is expected of her at school. Go over things more than once and encourage the teacher to begin to build a relationship with your child. It's important that she know the physical surroundings as well. Being sure of small things like the location of bathrooms, cafeteria, or playground can help make her relaxed and confident. "Because Lily had visited the school a few times before the first day, she actually became a kind of 'tour guide' for the more timid kids. She surprised everyone with her new-found confidence. This held over as she interacted with teachers as well. We are all delighted. Who knew that just a little advance planning would provide such dividends?" Lily's mother, Janice, said.

☑ Remember that you **are the very best judge of your child.** Some children need quite a lot of advance planning while others do better with less notice. Don't "overtalk" but be sure that you are communicating. It's a delicate balance but one worth the effort. Avoid setting up unrealistic expectations such as "You'll just love the first day. School is wonderful!" You can be positive without dictating what your child "should" feel about school. Listening is important. Ask open-ended questions and let him find his own answers. Don't say "Wasn't school great?" Instead ask "What did you think of your first day at school?" You will learn so much about your child's thoughts and feelings and you will really be able to understand his perspective.

☑ The most important thing is to **support your child during this critical transition**. Help and guide her while providing opportunities for her to talk. Realize that everyone handles new challenges in different ways. Saying "good-bye" to baby-hood is tough for everyone but new beginnings can also be wonderful. A good first experience at school will give your child many new and positive skills upon which she will build throughout her life.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Library Resources

Art, Music, and Play

🕮 ***A Cheerful Note for Jack*** by Arlene Boehm; Roberts Rinehart Publishers; Boulder, CO, 1996; Hardcover, $14.95. As Jack was walking along the road, he finds a musical note. Of course, as a bear, he didn't recognize what it was. With the help of his friends, Jack discovers the joys of music.

🕮 ***A Child's Book of Play in Art***; selected by Lucy Micklethwait; DK Publishing; New York, 1996; Oversized, $16.95. A wonderful way to introduce very young children to art. The book groups paintings by category such as Let's Play, and How Do They Smell, even Make Up a Story, to offer ways to think about art. The *Note to Parents and Teachers* gives activities to do with children to encourage their deeper involvement. One of the very few, well done, books aimed at encouraging a child's appreciation of art.

🕮 ***Drawing Lessons from a Bear*** by David McPhail; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 2000, Hardcover, $14.95. A book for children who just love to draw. It's about a bear who learns how to be a bear, and does it quite well, but is also an artist. Because that's what he wants to be.

🕮 ***Jack in Search of Art*** by Arlene Boehmn; Roberts Rinehart Publishers; Boulder, CO, 1998; Softcover, $7.95. Jack the bear decides to get out of the rain and see art. He looks all over the building for someone named Art, but in the process sees beautiful pictures, and visitors all enjoying Art.

🕮 ***Magpie Magic*** by April Wilson; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $14.99). Told exclusively through pictures, it's the story of an illustrator whose drawings, including that of a magpie bird, come to life, and cause much mischief. Very cleverly done. Make up the text of the book with your youngster to add enjoyment.

🕮 ***Mouse Magic*** by Ellen Stoll Walsh; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA, 2000; Hardcover, $14.00. An introduction not only to blending of primary colors (red, blue, and yellow) to get secondary colors (green, purple, and orange) but the way the colors can (if you stare at them long enough) actually seem to move. The science behind the effect isn't described, but it will amaze a youngster to "see" the effect in action.

🕮 ***Oxford First Book of Art*** by Gillian Wolfe; Oxford University Press; New York, 1999; Oversize, $18.95. This book is aimed at youngsters who are just past preschool age but it is excellent. It encourages children to look at the elements of the paintings, drawings and sculptures to investigate their content and meaning. Each piece has a description and *Look Closer* and *Activity* sections to deepen involvement.

🕮 ***That's How It Is When We Draw*** by Ruth Lercher Bornstein; Clarion Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.00. A combination of poems and illustrations conveys the sense of excitement and wonder that is part of creativity. Create monsters and ladybugs. Express feelings. Explore colors.

🕮 ***The Song of Six Birds*** by Rene Deetlefs; illustrated by Lyn Gilbert; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. In a small village in Africa, Lindiwe is given a flute. But, at first, she can't play the flute. There is no music in it. So, the young girl goes around the village gathering the music of the birds' songs and she plays back to the delight of family and friends.

🕮 ***The Story of the Incredible Orchestra*** by Bruce Koscielniak, Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 2000; Hardcover, $15.00. This book probably has more information than a preschooler needs, but it provides an introduction to the history of orchestras and the instruments that make the music.

🕮 ***What Do Illustrators Do?*** by Eileen Christelow; Clarion Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.00. A companion to the book *What Do Authors Do?* this book shows how two artists can illustrate the same story very differently. It takes the reader through all steps of the creative process with the pets of the artists adding a touch of gentle humor.

🕮 ***You Can Make a Collage*** by Eric Carle; Klutz, Inc. Palo Alto, CA; 1998; Activity book, $19.95. Does your youngster love Eric Carle's book and his illustrations? Or, when sitting with you and a book spend more time looking at the pictures than enjoying the words? If so, this is perfect. It contains 72 sheets of tissue paper with the designs created by Carle, and takes you through the steps to reproduce the collages, or make your own. Great fun.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

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JUGAR

El Trabajo de Nuestros Niños

¿Ha escuchado a alguien decir, ¡"Lo único que hacen esos niños es jugar"! como si jugar fuese una pérdida de tiempo? En realidad, el juego puede ser cualquier cosa menos una deplorable pérdida de oportunidades. Es la manera en que los niños aprenden –tocando, moviéndose y experimentando.

Imagínese que Ud. se encuentra con lo que parece ser una caja de madera sellada. ¿Qué haría? ¿La tocaría con los dedos, buscando manillas, botones, pestillos? Quizás la sacudiría o empezaría a tocarla en distintos lugares en búsqueda de resortes secretos. Quizás trate de levantar los bordes. En resumen, Ud. usaría todo su repertorio de respuestas a "qué hacer con objetos desconocidos".

Bien, ahora considere que haría su bebé cuando ve algo nuevo. Ella experimentaría con todos sus trucos propios, los que aprendió investigando otros objetos nuevos. Dependiendo de su edad, quizás primero intentaría metérsela a la boca como una manera de exploración. Quizás la agitaría. O la golpearía. O quizás intentaría golpear cosas con la caja. Supongamos que el objeto de su exploración es un tubo hueco. Y supongamos que Ud. le demuestra como mirar a través del tubo con un ojo cerrado, o a usar los labios para hacer un sonido. Ella ha aprendido dos nuevas maneras de interacción con objetos desconocidos y a explorar sus posibilidades. La próxima vez que ella encuentre un objeto nuevo con cualquier tipo de hoyo, seguramente intentará mirar a través de él, o llevárselo a los labios e intentará de hacer sonidos. Todo esto es aprendizaje –aprendizaje a través del juego.

A medida que los niños crecen sus juegos cambian. Un niño chico usará una cuchara de madera como objeto para pegar, golpeando cualquier cosa que esté a la mano. Pero a medida que los niños dominan muchas de estas maneras iniciales de jugar y de interacción con objetos, sus juegos cambian y con ello su selección de materiales. Ya no están contentos con distintas selecciones de cucharas, ollas, tubos huecos, nuestros niños están listos para los juguetes y los juegos. Pero el aprendizaje continua. Y seguirá a través de sus vidas.

LEARNING SUMMIT
LEARNING LOOKOUT
EDUCATION EDGE
NEW LEARNING VISTAS

Bloques de Madera y Plastilina (Playdough)

Los bloques de madera y la plastilina ayuda a los niños a desarrollar habilidades motoras finas. Los niños no nacen con la capacidad de controlar los músculos finos de sus dedos y manos. El proceso comienza a temprana edad, cuando los bebés y los niños pequeños tratan de alcanzar y agarrar objetos, pero el desarrollo y coordinación de los músculos de la muñeca y de los dedos –que más tarde son necesarios para escribir– llegan lentamente y requieren de mucha práctica.

La plastilina, la greda, y los bloques para armar (como los bloques marca Lego) fomentan fuerza y destreza. Simplemente pellizcando, enrollando y formando la plastilina los niños desarrollan estos músculos. Conectar bloques desarrolla los músculos de la mano y asir la mano como tenaza –

poder tocar el pulgar con los dedos es importante para poder agarrar lapiceras, lápices, cubiertos, y cepillos dentales.

La plastilina y los bloques son materiales abiertos que le permiten a los niños explorar con creatividad. A una nuñeca a cuerda solo se le puede dar cuerda y soltarla para que camine mientras en niño se sienta a mirarla. Pero los niños pueden experimentar con la plastilina y los bloques cuando se les de la gana. Un día los bloques pueden ser un avión, y el próximo, un sofá. Los niños pueden crear vehículos y casas, incluso pueblos completos. Su juego sólo es limitado por su imaginación y no por los materiales.

El Poder de los Rompecabezas

Los rompecabezas ayudan a los niños pequeños a desarrollar coordinación entre los ojos y las manos. Aprender a controlar sus manos y dedos es una destreza que también le ayuda a los niños en sus primeros esfuerzos por escribir.

Rompecabezas de madera de tres o cuatro piezas, en que cada pieza encaja en su lugar preciso, son, generalmente, los primeros tipos de rompecabezas que se les da a los niños pequeños. A medida que los niños maduran y progresan en su capacidad de rotar las piezas para hallar el lugar preciso y encontrar las piezas que encajan, los niños pueden empezar a manejar rompecabezas más complejos.

Los rompecabezas también enseñan a pensar y a resolver problemas. Cuando los niños aprenden a hacer estos rompecabezas (frecuentemente con la ayuda de los padres) desarrollan una manera lógica de poner las piezas. En vez de hacerlo al azar, tomando las piezas aleatoriamente y juntándolas a la fuerza, los niños aprenden a empezar con las piezas de las esquinas. Buscan los bordes. Buscan los colores que necesitan la pieza para que se parezca a las piezas que ya tienen. Empiezan a unir una pieza con azul para el cielo con las que tienen un poco de verde en la parte inferior para poder juntarlas con piezas parecidas.

Los rompecabezas hechos en casa son entretenidos de fabricar y para jugar. Bonitos gráficos de revistas o postales pueden ser pegados al cartón y cortados para hacer un rompecabezas. Busque fotografías sobre temas de especial interés para su niño. Los niños que están desarrollando la habilidad de usar tijeras también pueden fabricar sus propios rompecabezas.

La Caja Juguetona Llena de Cosas

¿Qué seria de la infancia sin los juegos de ilusión? Les da a los niños la oportunidad de ir más allá de los confines del mundo real e integrarse a uno que pueden fabricar de acuerdo a sus propios intereses. Los niños pueden ir a cualquier parte y ser cualquiera persona a través del poder de su imaginación.

No solo amplia los horizontes de los niños y estimula su creatividad, sino que también aumenta sus destrezas cognitivas. Para los juegos de simulación los niños deben poder acordarse de experiencias y después recrearlas. ¿Como sería ser dueño de una tienda? Ser panadero? Para imaginárselo deben poder visualizar las experiencias en su mente y crear guiones y narraciones de los fragmentos de sus recuerdos. Después, pueden incluso ir mas allá. ¿Cómo sería ser astronauta? ¿Qué podríamos comer si estuviéramos abandonados en una isla desierta? ¿Donde dormiríamos?

A los niños les gusta experimentar con distintos roles y actividades. Un día un niño puede simular ir al supermercado; Hacer una lista; reunir los productos; pagar en la caja. Otro día ese niño puede simular ser dentista o bombero. O ir a pescar.

Una manera de alentar el juego dramático – experiencias de simulación que aumentan las habilidades para resolver problemas y las habilidades cognitivas de su niño– es a través del uso de cajas o bolsas de útiles. Una caja con el tema de un día en la playa podría tener toallas de playa, trajes de baño viejos, botellas vacías de loción para broncearse, anteojos ahumados, y quizás incluso algunas conchitas de mar. Un uslero, moldes de galletas, plastilina, cacerolas, cucharas, toallas de cocina pueden convertirse en útiles para una panadería.

En realidad, la creación de una caja de útiles puede convertirse en parte de la entretención. Siéntese con su niño y decida los temas que le gustaría tener y empiece a juntar el equipo. Una vez que lo haya decidido, marque claramente los envases, quizás con fotos y palabras y almacénelos donde su niño pueda alcanzarlos. A medida que los intereses de su niño cambian, haga una colección nueva. Cuando vengan a visitar los amigos, ellos pueden decidir quien quieren ser y donde, y así empezar el juego dramático.

El juego de todo tipo alienta el desarrollo del lenguaje y las destrezas sociales. Cuando los niños juegan juntos están jugando con sus pares y tienen que aprender a expresar sus sentimientos e ideas –y a tratar de resolver sus diferencias (incluso si a veces requiere un poco de ayuda de un adulto que los supervisa). El concepto de ser "justo" pasa a convertirse en un valor real cuando un niño se niega a entregar la pelota o la cuerda para saltar. Los deportes organizados vienen con su reglas propias, pero los juegos y los guiones que los niños inventan y juegan entre sí son frecuentemente creados a medida que juegan. Las reglas son inventadas, refinadas, y establecidas a través de diálogo y negociación.

El juego también construye y alienta los intereses de su niño. Si a su niño le fascinan los dinosaurios, la plastilina ofrece horas de actividad modelando. Ella puede construir criaturas "prehistóricas" con juegos de construcción o dibujarlos con lápices de cera. Aprender sobre ellos a través de videos y libros. Incluso crear criaturas nuevas con distintos materiales.

¿Es su niño un artista en potencia? ¿Puede él explorar los singulares aspectos de distintos materiales para el arte? ¿Puede aprender como mezclar colores y explorar las texturas creadas con materiales caseros?

Temas de la estación de año y de las fiestas son muy entretenidos para los niños. Doble papel blanco y córtelo para crear copos de nieve. Cree un "collage" sobre "las cosas por la cual estoy agradecido" para el Día de Acción de Gracias.

El juego profundiza el involucramiento del niño con la literatura. ¿Cual es su cuento favorito? Ella podría construir el castillo encantado. En resumidas palabras, el juego le da a su niño una manera de explorar, e incluso ensayar sus intereses.

Proceso y Producto

Los adultos generalmente están preocupados con los resultados, los productos de nuestros esfuerzos. Queremos que el informe tenga buen aspecto, que las galletas sean ricas, o que las flores estén plantadas en filas.

Esto se debe en parte a que ya no tenemos que aprender a hacer estas actividades. Pero recuerde cuando Ud. recién aprendió a jugar baseball, damas, o a usar un nuevo programa para la computadora. Al principio Ud. necesitaba tiempo para "juguetear" - -para explorar que pasa si se hace esto o aquello. ¿Cuan fuerte debo patear la pelota? ¿Qué pasa cuando hago "clic" en un ícono de la computadora? En realidad, parte de nuestra frustración con estas experiencias de aprendizaje es el resultado de enfocar sobre el producto y no el proceso. No queremos pasar a través de la etapa del juego. Queremos ir directamente a un resultado exitoso.

Por suerte los niños gozan del proceso –la parte juego. Están aprendiendo cosas nuevas todo el tiempo, y necesitan la libertad de probarlas sin tener que preocuparse del resultado del producto. No importa si Ud. no puede reconocer su dibujo de un árbol o como armaron los bloques. Ellos están más fascinados con el proceso –la manera en que la pintura se desliza sobre el papel, la manera en que los bloques se caen cuando la torre se desploma, o como pueden cortar formas extrañas (con tijeras de seguridad especiales) en vez de cortar correctamente en el lugar señalado. Por eso su niño puede dibujar toda la tarde y, sin embargo, no podrá contarle que dibujó. Y por qué un niño puede echar arroz de una vasija a otra, y otro puede armar y desarmar collares de abalorios por horas. Están aprendiendo como hacerlo y dándose cuenta que aprender es entretenido y fascinante.

Puede ser difícil para los adultos ver más allá del producto de un actividad y ver que está aprendiendo el niño de este proceso. Quizás esté aprendiendo coordinación o los primeros pasos de escribir, o haciendo descubrimientos sobre triángulos o sobre la gravedad. Lo que sea, ella ciertamente está aprendiendo que hacerlo sola da mucha satisfacción - -y eso entrega confianza.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. es la editora de Parent and Preeschooler Newsletter. Alguna de la información de este artículo está basada en información suministrada por la National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C.

Gratis del American Toy Institute, Inc.

Fun Play, Safe Play. Un folleto de 19 páginas que enfoca la importancia del juego y los lineamientos para la selección de juguetes seguros y apropiados. También está disponible en español.

Guide to Toys for Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired. Una descripción de juguetes que pueden ser interesantes para niños ciegos o visualmente discapacitados seleccionados por la American Foundation for the Blind. Evidentemente hay muchos más en el mercado que son apropiados para estos niños, por lo tanto el folleto contiene pautas para la selección de juguetes adicionales.

Para recibir una copia gratis de estos folletos llame: 1 800 851-9955
El American Toy Institute es la subsidiaria educativa de la Toy Manufacturers of America, Inc. La TMA también tiene una línea telefónica gratis sobre seguridad de juguetes: 1 877 TOY SAFETY

Línea telefónica de ayuda de juguetes Lekotek

Lekotek (que traducido liberalmente del sueco quiere decir biblioteca del juego) tiene una línea telefónica gratis para ayudar a seleccionar juguetes y materiales apropiados para niños discapacitados. Llame a Lekotek Toy Resources Helpline de lunes a viernes de 9:00 AM a 4:00 PM (Hora Central) para conversar con expertos en juguetes, materiales de juego, e ideas creativas para el juego para niños discapacitados. Los Lekotek Leaders también tienen una biblioteca de catálogos de juguetes, y guías de recursos y de referencia. Llame al número gratis:

1 800 366-PLAY

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When Kids Ask "Those" Questions

Becoming An Askable Parent

Your five-year-old comes home after a sleep-over with her best friend and says, "Mom, Mrs. Taylor is pregnant. How did they make a baby?" Your heart beats faster, your breathing quickens, you feel your stomach turning with anxiety. How do you handle the situation?

A) Change the subject and hope she forgets.
B) Tell her you will talk about it later, knowing you won't bring it up.
C) Take a deep breath, collect your thoughts then begin to explain how babies are conceived.
D) Tell her you really want to answer questions, but need time to think of the best explanation. Ask her to give you a few minutes, then discuss it with her within that time.

Whatever you might be tempted to do, the answer is either C or D. As a nurse, sex therapist, and parent I find all too often that anxiety at these times stops parents from answering their children's important questions.

For many parents the problem lies in the fact that they did not have open and honest talks with their own parents, and so have no role model. There is little to guide them in talking to their children.

let me tell you 'bout the birds & the
bees & the flowers & the trees...

Another factor is the *anxiety* many people feel around the topic of sexuality and children. However, being an "askable" parent means coping with your anxiety, then seizing the moment in order to answer your children, when and where they ask their questions.

In this case, take a deep breath, collect your thoughts, and offer your child information. Remember you do not have to be a perfect parent, just an attentive one doing your best.

Parents, peers, media, school and religious institutions are all sources of information on sexual topics, but parents are primary, based on both time and influence with a child. And yet the fact remains unchanged, since studies in the 1940s, that parents often abandon their role leaving peers and the media to be the sex educators of our youth. When information is provided by parents, mothers seem to take the lead. A 1997 study revealed only 11% of fathers talk with their children about sexual matters.

A Foundation:
Earlier Than You Think

The foundation for sexual attitudes and behaviors is formed in the early years. By the age of twelve children stop coming to parents for information, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation study in 1998. It is critical that parents lay this foundation as a child begins to walk and talk. Sharing appropriate sexual information in all stages of a child's development not only provides a base of knowledge, but also encourages a strong self image and a certain comfort and matter-of-fact attitude. These informed kids are less likely to engage in high-risk behavior when they know they can talk to parents about a subject.

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Sending Messages

Parents send children daily sexuality messages. Your loving and appropriate touch as you wash your child or change her clothes sends messages of respect and affection. These silent lessons become a layer of the sexual foundation.

We say "physical touch is good" when we hold our infants, smile into their little faces and show concern. This loving touch becomes associated with caring and good touch.

Parents continue to supply valuable information about touch as children grow. We tell a curious toddler: “Your body belongs to you. No one has the right to touch you without your permission. If you ever feel uncomfortable about touch say 'stop,' and come and tell me.”

Parents send other messages when providing a vocabulary for their children, using proper names for body parts. Cute names can only confuse the facts. By using words like "penis" and "vagina" parents prepare children to respect their bodies.

The modeling of physical affection demonstrated by loving parents, respectful communication between parents, and with a child are vital for a solid sexual identity. I certainly want my children to see respect and healthy boundaries modeled in our home.

How to be an "Askable" Parent

As children grow their little bodies will change. They will have questions along the way and, as their parent, they need you to be there to answer those many questions. Here are six essential strategies to become an “askable” parent.

1) ***Commit to more than one discussion about sexuality.*** One long talk is actually counterproductive. Children need to talk at different times about different topics. As their bodies change, as sexual feelings develop, as curiosity expands, children need to feel free to come to parents for help with these concerns. They also need to be able to ask question about what they saw on a television program or heard at school.

Toddlers want to know about body parts, the way they work, why you have one and Dad has another. You can say, “Tommy, Mommy doesn't have a penis like you and Daddy. Mommy is a woman and women have vaginas.”

From age two to about five sexual curiosity is often heightened. Parents may find children involved in play that looks sexual in content. Recently a neighbor came by to ask me, the “nurse,” for a consult. Earlier that day she found her four-year-old "playing doctor," with a little friend. Both girls had their clothes off and were examining parts. “Girls, I see you are playing doctor. I'm sure you find it fun, but you need to put your clothes back on. You can touch your own bodies in the privacy of your bedrooms but not someone else's body.”

My neighbor wondered if she had handled the situation appropriately. "Yes," I assured her. Sex play is very normal. Overreacting, as a parent, sends a message that they are being bad. Instead, speak in a normal tone of voice. Think about your facial expressions. Above all, don't panic. Remember, our little folks are naturally curious and, at that age, their bodies are full of new sensations and pleasure.

If you have more than one child try to talk with them separately, even about the same subject. Younger children could easily lose “air time” when a louder, all knowing sibling pipes in.

2) ***Talk to your partner about the kinds of information to share.*** Discuss not only who teaches what, but how to answer questions, and the family morals and values to impart. This coming together can lessen mixed messages and provide a practice session (and perhaps also decrease anxiety). Try to involve both parents in the learning episode. A father's voice, if available, is important in establishing children's positive image toward their emerging sexual identity.

As you think about these talks with children consider discussing this with other adults who have already managed these hurdles with their own children, or people you trust and admire for their parenting skills. Anticipating the next developmental stage and the predictable questions can also prevent some confusion and fear a child may experience.

For example, two- to four-year-olds need the privacy lesson. “When you see Mommy's and Daddy's bedroom door closed I want you to knock. Everyone needs private time, so we will also knock when your door is closed.” These boundary lessons bring into motion two important family values, privacy and respect.

3) ***Purchase resource books to assist in discussions.*** Few parents know everything. Libraries and book stores are filled with books appropriate for children and parents.

How can you use these books? You can read sections to a child as a way of leading into a topic and answering questions. You can let a child's book serve as a family resource left in clear view on the bookshelf. For those times when a child may want to read a section based on his current level of interest, an “askable” parent could then offer to discuss the material and clear up any misinformation.

The stories I hear from parents in my private practice are “As a child I was given a book and told to 'just ask' if I had any questions. That was often the last time the book was ever mentioned.” Please don't make that mistake. Read the book, sections at a time, together with the "open" child. For a child with a more quiet spirit, encourage her to read a section, then talk about it together.

4) ***Seek out "teachable moments."*** These are the times when sexuality lessons could flourish. Life in your community (a friend's mother becomes pregnant) can be an excellent opportunity for learning.

Today's children are also bombarded by the media with strong sexual messages. To counter this, pay attention to what they see on television and be ready to share your own values and messages.

Recently my five year old niece, Rebecca, was watching MTV with my daughter. The songs, the clothes, the body movements were not the most appropriate for her. It wasn't my role to set a value boundary with Rebecca, but since she was at my house with my eleven year old daughter, Jordan, I handled it this way. "Jordan, I don't think Rebecca is old enough to watch MTV, it is too sexually suggestive for her. Let's turn on another program instead." Later I spoke to Jordan to share my concern about the sexual moves, songs and messages she was witnessing. This mother can certainly bear witness to the fact that the same issue brings up new lessons for different ages.

An important rule of thumb for childbirth and pregnancy lessons is if your child has not asked between the ages of five and eight you need to find a time to address the issue. Letting time pass without the discussion tells a child that it is not an issue to talk about, or that you are too uncomfortable to speak about it.

A program on television can initiate this topic. You can ask your child, "What did you think about the queen in the cartoon. She had a baby. How do you think babies are made?" If "the stork" is the answer, you have lots of room for discussion. I would start simple: "Fathers have sperm cells and mothers have eggs. When the man's penis releases the sperm into the mother's vagina and it finds the egg, together they grow into a baby." If the child wants more she'll ask.

One other hint about seeking out time to teach children relates to times in the car. The leading place for children to ask you questions is while in the car. Why? They have a parent held captive. You can't pick up the newspaper, or have your attention devoted to another activity. So, be prepared.

5) ***Admit there will be tense moments.*** You may need to collect your thoughts and rein in your nerves then come back to the child. But, never say "we will talk later" and then avoid the discussion. You lose credibility with your child when you avoid his or her concerns. It's okay not to be an expert. Rich experiences between children and parents occur when you research an issue and find the answer together.

At times you may feel embarrassed, lack confidence in answering the question, or think a child is not ready for the information. These are all normal feelings. But they can't be allowed to stop you from talking to your youngster. Be courageous and talk.

6) ***Answer only the question asked.*** Listen carefully to what is being asked. Do not give more information than is needed. You may think this will give your child all the information so the topic won't come up again, but in fact, it can confuse and overwhelm a child. An example might be when your four-year-old asks why the couple on TV is sleeping together when they aren't married? A parent can respond, "Some people sleep together when they are not married, that is true. But in our family we believe that you should wait and get married first." You've provided information on family values, and answered the question. If more information is needed, your youngster will ask.

The goal of being an "askable" parent is to answer questions and eliminate fear while assisting to build a child's self-esteem and positive picture of herself. Yes, these can be anxiety-provoking times but it is well worth the investment in your relationship with your child.

Dona H. Caine, M.S.N.,R.N.,C.S. is a nurse psychotherapist and AASECT certified sex therapist in Raleigh, North Carolina. She is a mother to Ben (age 14), Jordan (age 11), and Erin (now 25). In addition, she is the author of "When Benjamin Wants to Know: Family Conversations about the Facts of Life," and "When Jessica Wants to Know: Family Conversations About the Facts of Life."

Oh No! What Do I Do Now?

What messages about sexuality and sexual topics do you want to convey to your youngster? Here are two common situations parents face, and a plan to help you decide what to do.

GENDER ROLES

✦ The Situation

You enter your four-year-old son's room and find him changing the diaper on the baby doll belonging to his playmate Mary. He asks: "Will you buy me a baby doll like this?"

Step one: ask yourself *"Why is he doing that?"*

- He may have seen it on television.
- He wants something his friend has.
- It's a different and interesting kind of toy for him. None of the other boys he knows has a doll.
- He has seen adults changing diapers.
- He's having fun playing Daddy.

Examples of Messages

- Boys who do girls' things aren't normal and may become homosexuals.
- Only girls and women are supposed to take care of babies.
- Playing with different kinds of toys is good because it will develop broader creativity.
- Sex roles should be interchangeable.

Step two: now ask yourself *"What response will give the message I want?"*

Decide on a response that conveys your message and teaches the children what you want them to learn.

Possible Responses

- Response: "This is a girl's toy. Boys don't play with dolls."

Message: *There are toys that are only for boys and toys that are only for girls.*

- Response: "It's nice that you like to play Daddy."

Message: *Play is rehearsal for adult behavior. Taking care of a baby is an acceptable adult male behavior.*

- Response: "I won't buy you a doll but you can play with your friend's doll."

Message: *A mixed message. The child can't have his own doll, but it's okay to play with dolls sometimes.*

- Response: "It would be okay with me, but your Dad wouldn't let you have it."

Message: *Your mother and father don't always agree on everything. In this situation, Dad is the boss.*

- Response: "We'll think about it. Why don't you and Mary play with something else."

Message: *Playing with a doll is not OK at this time. If Mother really doesn't intend to think about it but would rather ignore it, she will convey this in the way she responds.*

PLAYING DOCTOR

✦ The Situation

You walk into your son's bedroom and find him being examined by his friend Tammy. He has his clothes off and she is listening to his heart with a toy stethoscope.

Step one: ask yourself *"Why are they doing that?"*

- They may be curious about each other's body.
- They may be *imitating* what happens in the doctor's office.
- They may be *imitating* what they've seen on television.

Examples of Messages

- It's wrong to touch someone else's body.
- Bodies are private.
- Only doctors should do that.
- It's all right to be curious.
- It's wrong to play without your clothes on.

☞ **Remember:** Curiosity about bodies is normal. Children are curious about both sexes.

Step two: now ask yourself, *"What response will give the message I want?"*

Possible Responses

Decide on a response that conveys your message and teaches children what you want them to learn.

- Response: "Put your clothes on right now! I never want to see this again!"

Message: *The children are bad, but they may decide to repeat the behavior where the parent will not see it.*

- Response: "Tammy, put your clothes on and go home right now!"

Message: *Tammy is bad, and it's her fault.*

- Response: "It's OK to be curious about each other. Put your clothes on, and I will show you some pictures of other bodies."

Message: *Curiosity is OK, and the parent will make sure their questions are answered.*

- Response: "I don't want you touching each other's body. Bodies are private and I'd like you to keep your clothes on when you play."

Message: *Nudity and touching are private and the parent is letting the children know the limits of their play.*

- Response: Ignore them.

Message: *Children don't learn anything. They may, or may not, continue playing in this way. Even if you don't respond verbally, your attitude itself conveys a message.*

Excerpted with permission from: Oh No! What Do I Do Now? published by SIECUS - The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350, New York, NY 10036-7802. Phone: 212-819-9770.

Website:www.siecus.org

Sexuality

For Parents:

📖 ***From Diapers to Dating: A parent's guide to raising sexually healthy children*** by Debra W. Haffner, MPH; Newmarket Press; New York; 1999; Hardcover, $22.95.

If you only buy one book to help you navigate through your child's sexual development, make it this one. It's informative, warm, friendly, and written by one of the real experts in the field. Ms. Haffner is the president of SIECUS, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States and one of the country's leading sexual development educators.

And, the book covers everything, starting with infants and toddlers and working its way up to preteens. Want some help with teaching the names of body parts? Need to think through the issue of gender roles? What about those pesky statements like "When I grow up I'm going to marry mommy?" All covered.

As children get older, other issues arise. AIDS, bad language, preparing children for puberty, body image, early and late development. All covered, with concrete examples, anecdotes (ones you will find very familiar) and sensible advice.

For Children:

There are many books already in bookstores and libraries. Here are two recent publications.

📖 ***Making Animal Babies*** by Sneed B. Collard III; illustrated by Steve Jenkins; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston; 2000; Hardcover, $16.00.

Nicely done text and pictures place making human babies in the larger context of ways many species reproduce. The pages have larger print text that is perfect for children, and smaller print text that provides more detailed information that parents may find helpful.

📖 ***What's the Big Secret? Talking about sex with girls and boys***; Laurie Krasny Brown, Ed.D., and Marc Brown; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 1997; Hardcover, $15.95; softcover, $5.95.

Another excellent book from the team that created the Dino Life Guides. This one covers the anatomical differences between boys and girls, privacy, touch, and how babies are started, grow and are born. Gentle, thorough, and useful for parents and children.

Dear Reader

One day, when I was a child, I asked my mother that inevitable (and no doubt dreaded) question: how do babies get into their mothers' stomachs? I clearly remember her evasive nonanswer. The only information it provided was that this wasn't a topic I should bring up again. So, I never did.

I can't remember how I finally learned the correct answer, but before I did I had picked up some amazing, and off-putting misinformation.

Most of my contemporaries had similar experiences. Anything that involved sex, that three-letter word, was strictly off-limits for parental discussion.

Happily, times are changing. Parents can and do talk to their kids about sexual topics. But we still may wonder "what sexual topics would we talk about with a preschooler?" Sexuality is a lot broader than how babies are made, although that certainly comes up. It includes the groundwork for male-female relationships, for how children view their bodies, and see their role in the world.

This month's issue focuses on sexuality. Dona Cain – parent, nurse psychotherapist, and certified sex therapist – has written an excellent article on how to be an askable parent when kids ask "those" questions. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) provides further help in two specific circumstances that may lead parents to ask "Ohmygosh, what should I do now?"

Dawn Barhyte's *Kids Crafts*, *Early Child Care: What the Research Shows*, and *Library Resources* complete our September issue.

Welcome back from summer. We've got a terrific fall lineup here at *P&p Newsletter* and we can't wait to share it with you.

Neala Schwartzberg

Insure Kids Now! HOTLINE

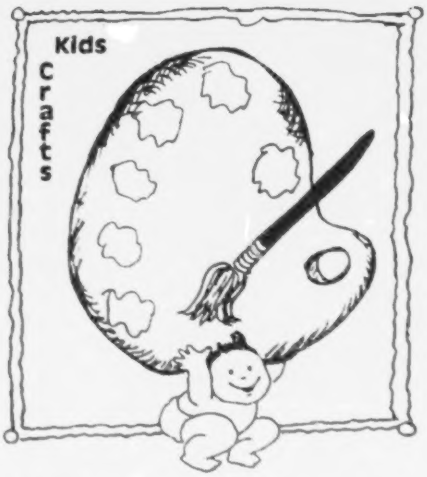
About 11 million American youngsters lack health insurance. Is your child among them? If so call: 1-877-KIDS-NOW.

Sponsored by the US Department of Health & Human Services (Health Resources and Services Administration) this toll-free number connects you to your state hotline for State Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid information and applications.

In August, 1997 President Clinton signed the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) into law. This 10-year, $40 billion appropriation helped states expand health insurance to children whose families earned too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to pay for private health insurance.

"Every child in this country deserves quality health care," said HRSA Administrator Claude Earl Fox, MD, MPH. "This toll-free hotline links parents to the insurance and health care their kids need to grow up healthy and strong.

1-877-KIDS-NOW



Kids Crafts

Ahhh. Autumn is a gorgeous season -- the dazzling colors are bound to inspire and there are so many natural materials to use for crafts. It's art just waiting to happen.

Most of us also begin to spend more time indoors. What better way to pass time than making things with our kids? Crafts are a fun way for families to spend quality time together, so support their work and these masterpieces will help develop self confidence.

Before making this issues' crafts, go on a rambling nature hike. It's a wonderful time to explore the outdoors and collect the many materials just waiting to be discovered! Capture some of the beauty and bring it inside.

Leaf Wreath

You will need: Cardboard, large and small plate for tracing, pencil, hole puncher, string, **lots** of leaves (red maple, elm, fern and oak, even clusters of leaves will work well), glue, scissors.

First, it's a good idea to dry the leaves your child chooses to use for this project. Place them somewhere where they won't be in the way. After a week of drying they should be ready to use.

Begin by using the large and small dishes as stencils for the wreath, the smaller inside the larger. Your child will need assistance to cut out the shape. Then he can simply glue the leaves on the wreath. Don't worry about the glue getting on the leaves, it dries clear and helps preserve the leaves longer.

After it dries overnight, punch a hole in the top, run a string through it and it's ready to hang as a welcome sign for friends during the season.

Leaf Rubbings

You will need: White paper, assorted leaves (especially different shapes and textures), crayons or yellow red, orange paint

This simple project looks great when complete and can be made in a short time for those eager crafters. Have your child place the leaves face down, under a sheet of paper so the rough, textured part of the leaf is facing up.

Turn a crayon on its side and rub gently over the leaves. If your child has trouble with the leaves sliding have her use scotch tape to secure them in place. Or she can dip the leaves in the vibrant colors of the season using the leaves as printers.

While working on this project have your child sort the leaves according to color, size and shape. This will foster classification skills.

Autumn Sun Catchers

You will need: Small flowers and leaves like ferns, pansies, telephone book or other heavy book, scissors, clear contact paper, glitter, hole puncher, satin ribbon.

These delicate danglers will add sparkle to any window and they are an easy way to capture a little bit of the great outdoors. A few days in advance gather some natural materials and place them in the middle of the phone book to flatten.

Once flattened, remove the flowers and leaves from the book. Have your child cut out two pieces of the contact paper allowing him to decide on the size and shape.

Remove the protective film from each sheet and place it sticky side up. Have your child skillfully arrange the materials in the center of one of the pieces of clear contact paper.

Sprinkle a small amount of glitter around the arrangement.

When it is finished, help your child press the pieces of contact paper together (sticky side to sticky side). Finally have your child cut the desired shape then punch a hole in the top thread a ribbon through and it's ready to hang.

Pintsize Nature Bouquet

You will need:
Pine cones, dried flowers, cattails, acorns, leaves and grass, styrofoam ball or clay, small terracotta pot, craft glue, popsicle sticks, fall colored ribbon.

Have your child choose the natural materials they wish to use for this project, encouraging an assortment to make the bouquet interesting. Have your child use the craft glue to attach the materials to the popsicle sticks. Let them dry thoroughly.

Discuss the varied textures of the materials and use descriptive words like rough, smooth, or bumpy to describe them.

Finally, place the styrofoam ball or clay in the bottom of the pot and stick the ends of the popsicle sticks to form a bouquet. Finally tie a ribbon around the pot and it's ready to display. This craft will keep for years as an attractive reminder of your child's accomplishment as well as the fall season.

Dawn Marie Barbyte

Early Child Care:
What the Research Shows

The percentage of mothers with children under six years of age who work outside the home has steadily increased from 39% in the mid 1970s to 62% in the late 1990s (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

In 1991 a team of researchers across the U.S. supported by grants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) enrolled over 1300 children in one of the most comprehensive studies conducted on the impact of early child care on children's development within the context of the family environment.

➔ ***Does Poverty Predict the Child Care Experience?*** Families who moved in and out of poverty were most likely to place their infants in child care before 3 month of age. Researchers suggest that mother's employment was necessary to lift the family out of poverty. When the mother worked, and she put the child in some form of care, the family was able to move up economically.

The quality of care received by children in poverty differed by source of care. Children who attended a care center tended to receive better quality care while those in home settings (a child care home provider, or family member) received lower quality care.

The family's economic situation also influenced the amount of care, and age of entry. Families more dependent on a mother's income placed their infants in care at an earlier age, and used more hours of care.

➔ ***Does Child Care Reduce Mother-Child Attachment?*** Child care itself had little effect on a child's attachment to the mother (when measured at 15 months of age). But mothers' sensitivity to their youngsters made a difference when combined with poorer quality care. Infants who received poor quality of care for more than 10 hours per week or were in more than one child care setting in the first 15 months were more likely to be insecurely attached to their mothers but only if their mothers were lower in sensitivity to their children's needs. It was the combination that seemed to put these children at risk for poor attachment.

➔ ***Does Child Care Reduce the Quality of the Mother-Child Interaction?*** The more hours of care over the first 6 months of life the less sensitivity shown by mothers and the lower the children's positive engagement at 36 months. However, the quality of care made a difference. Low-income mothers using full-time higher quality care showed more positive involvement with their children at 6 months than low-income mothers not using care, or using lower-quality full-time care.

➔ ***What Effect Does Child Care Have on Problem Behaviors?*** Not surprising, sensitivity of the mothers was more strongly associated with children's behavior than the child care experience. However, children in care who received more sensitive and responsive attention had fewer caregiver-reported problems.

➔ ***What Effect Does Child Care have on Children's Cognitive and Language Development?*** Quality of care was consistently associated with children's cognitive and language development. What makes the difference? More activities that stimulate language and more interaction between the child and the child care provider. This also affected children's cognitive development and school readiness.

Of course, mothers still made a difference. But high quality child care enhanced, while low quality care reduced, cognitive and language skills compared to children who were cared for exclusively by their mothers.

➔ ***How Good Are Child Care Centers?*** Not perfect. The researchers found that most child care center classes did not meet recommended guidelines for child-staff ratios, group sizes, teacher training, and teacher education.

➔ ***Does this Matter?*** Absolutely! Children in centers that met more guidelines did better than those in centers that met fewer guidelines. They had fewer behavior problems, better language comprehension and school readiness.

The reason for this association is not clear but the research team found that cleaner, safer, and more physically stimulating settings had care-givers who provided more sensitive, responsive and cognitively stimulating care.

The NICHD study is ongoing. One of the reports, the NICHD Study of Early Child Care (NIH Pub. No. 98-4318), describes some of the findings of the research and is the source of information for this article.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, PhD

It Really Does Come Down to Good Care

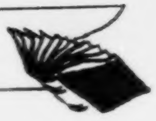
With the dramatic increase in the number of single parents and working parents with young children has come the question of how child care affects children's development. About ten years ago, the first worries were voiced about how children fared in care outside their home – did they get sick more often, were they more aggressive, did they suffer emotionally from being away from their parents? National studies have tried to define what children needed to thrive in child care settings.

What we found out was that while most child care does not hurt children, high quality care can have a positive impact on a child. However, high quality care is not so easy to find, and much harder to afford. Most working families do not use the kind of high-tech glossy child care centers that are often shown in magazines. Instead, many parents arrange for a patch work variety of care – neighbors, relatives, friends, home-based care and some center-based child care. Finally, most parents look for care that is convenient, affordable, and that at least meets minimal safety and care standards.

Whatever care you use for your child, you want to see that your child is receiving attention and affection from the caregivers. It is appropriate for you to come in unannounced and observe your child. Don't worry about being too anxious or pushy with your questions regarding the care your child is receiving. Finding the best care you can afford has to be a priority for a parent. Child care is family care – good care makes everyone stronger and happier; ineffective care makes both parents and children less confident and capable.

Sandra R. Wolkoff, CSW

LIBRARY RESOURCES



People's Stories

🕮 ***Annushka's Voyage*** by Edith Tarbescu; illustrated by Lydia Dabcovich; Clarion Books; New York; 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. In the early years of this century Annushka and her sister Tanya make the long trip from Russia to Ellis Island and New York to join their father. This is the story of many immigrant families who made their way to this country.

🕮 ***Apt. 3*** by Ezra Jack Keats; Viking; New York; 1971; Hardcover, $15.99. Evocative book about two young boys living in an old apartment building who hear music and want to find the musician. They discover him in apartment 3 and they listen as he plays "purples and grays and rain and smoke and the sounds of night." And he becomes their new friend.

🕮 ***Cheyenne Again*** by Eve Bunting; illustrated by Irving Toddy; Clarion Books; New York; 1995; Hardcover, $14.95. A young Cheyenne boy is torn from his home and sent to a school to forget his clothes, language and history. Although Young Bull hates the school and the teachers, he can not leave. In the late 19th and early 20th century these schools sought to forcibly separate young Native American children from their heritage. Even though Young Bull has to leave everything and everyone he knows and loves, he realizes that he can still hold on to his memories of his Cheyenne culture.

🕮 ***Hog Music*** by M. C. Helldorfer; illustrated by S. D. Schindler; Viking; New York; 2000; Hardcover, $15.99. Although it has little to do with hogs, or music, this is a charming and warm-hearted story of a birthday gift from Aunt Liza that eventually finds its way to a little girl who moved to a new home in Illinois. Since this takes place in the 1800s, the trip is quite eventful.

Let's Eat by Ana Zamorano; illustrated by Julie Vivas; Scholastic, Inc.; New York; 1996; Softcover, $5.99. In this big, warm, loving family getting people together at mealtime isn't easy. One day Papa can't come because he's busy working in the carpentry shop. Another day the sisters are practicing for the fiesta. And just when it looks like everyone will be there, Mama goes into the hospital to have a baby. But, finally, everyone does come to the table, including Mama and the new baby Rosa.

🕮 ***Mama and Me and the Model T*** by Faye Gibbons; illustrated by Ted Rand; Morrow Junior Books; New York; 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. The Longs and the Searcys are a blended family, with lots of children, and a brand new Model T. Mr. Long thought the car should be for men, and male children. Mama had a whole different idea. Mama may not have been a great driver, but she certainly made her point.

🕮 ***A Picnic in October*** by Eve Bunting; illustrated by Nancy Carpenter; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA; 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. The kids think a picnic for Lady Liberty in October is not a good idea. Why does Grandma want to go there and sing Happy Birthday to a statue? To celebrate the meaning of liberty and coming to America.

🕮 ***Train to Somewhere*** by Eve Bunting; illustrated by Ronald Himler; Clarion Books; New York; 1996; Paperback, $5.95. From the late 1850s to the early 1920s homeless children in New York were sent West by train for adoption. People would come to the station and pick out the children they wanted to take home. This book is a fictional account of one child's experience on the train, and finding a family.

🕮 ***The Wagon*** by Tony Johnston; paintings by James E. Ransome; Mulberry Paperback; New York; 1996; Paperback, $5.95. What is it like to be a slave? This is the story of a young boy and his family who are finally freed. The wagon they built for the Master years before eventually became their chariot to freedom.

MOVING ...?

We don't want you to miss even one issue of the *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*. So ... please remember to send us your address changes as soon as possible. Send your old address label to us along with your new address. Send this information to: *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* @ NSC&FGC; 480 Old Westbury Rd.; Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215; Attention: Subscription Dept.

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Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

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Cuando los Niños Hacen "Aquellas" Preguntas

Convirtiendose en un Padre Fácil de Preguntarle

Su hija de cinco años llega a la casa después de haberse quedado alojar con su mejor amiga y le dice: "Mami, la Sra. Taylor está embarazada. Cómo hicieron el bebé"? Su corazón late más rápido, su respiración se apresura. Y Ud. siente que su estomago es un nudo de ansiedad. ¿Cómo manejaría la situación?

1) Cambia el tema con la esperanza de que se le olvide.

2) Le dice que hablarán mas adelante, sabiendo que Ud. no lo planteará.

3) Respire profundo, ordene sus ideas y empiece a explicar como se conciben los bebés.

4) Le dice que Ud. realmente quiere contestarle las preguntas, pero que necesita tiempo para pensar sobre la mejor explicación. Pídale que le conceda algunos minutos, y después discútalo con ella un momento después.

No obstante qué tentación la embargue, la respuesta es C o D. Como enfermera, terapeuta sexual, y madre, yo frecuentemente veo que la angustia en estos momentos paraliza a los padres para poder contestar las preguntas importantes de sus hijos.

Para muchos padres el problema está en el hecho que ellos no tuvieron conversaciones abiertas y honestas con sus propios padres, y por lo tanto no tienen ejemplos que les hallan servido de modelo. En estos casos tienen poco para guiarse al conversar con sus hijos.

Otro factor es la ansiedad que muchas personas sienten sobre el tema de la sexualidad y los niños. Sin embargo, ser un padre "fácil de preguntarle" significa superar su ansiedad y aprovecharse del momento para poder contestarle a sus hijos cuando y donde planteen sus preguntas.

En este caso, respire profundo, ordene sus pensamientos, y ofrézcale a su niño la información. Recuerde que Ud. no tiene que ser un padre perfecto, solo uno que presta atención y que hace las cosas lo mejor posible.

Los padres, compañeros, los medios de comunicación, las escuelas y las instituciones religiosas, son todas fuentes de información sobre temas sexuales, pero los padres son preeminentes, ya que tienen tiempo e influencia sobre el niño. Sin embargo, el hecho es que nada ha cambiado desde que los estudios de los años cuarenta indicaron que los padres frecuentemente abandonan su papel, dejando a los compañeros de escuela y a los medios de comunicación convertirse en los educadores sexuales de nuestra juventud. Cuando la información es suministrada por los padres, las madres parecen tomar la delantera. Un estudio en 1977 reveló que solo 11% de los padres hablan con sus hijos sobre materias sexuales.

Sentar Las Bases - Antes de lo que Ud. Cree

bases para el desarrollo de las actitudes y conductas sexuales son establecidas en los primeros años. Cuando llegan a los 12 años, los niños dejan de acudir a sus padres para obtener información, de

let me tell you 'bout the birds & the
bees & the flowers & the trees...

acuerdo a un estudio de la Fundación de la Familia Kaiser en 1998. Es fundamental que los padres sienten las bases a medida que el niño empieza a caminar y hablar. Compartir información sexual apropiada en todas las etapas del desarrollo no solo da una base de conocimiento, sino que también alienta una fuerte auto imagen y una cierta comodidad y actitud natural. Estos niños informados son menos propicios a involucrarse en conductas de alto riesgo cuando saben que pueden hablarle a sus padres sobre el tema.

Enviando Mensajes

Los padres dan diariamente lecciones de sexualidad a sus niños. Sus caricias apropiadas cuando Ud. lava a su niño o le cambia su ropa, envían mensajes de afecto y respeto. Estas lecciones silenciosas se convierten en una capa de la bases sexuales.

Decimos que "las caricias físicas son buenas" cuando tomamos a nuestros bebés, les sonreímos a sus caritas y demostramos aprecio. Estas caricias se asocian con afecto y buenos contactos físicos.

Los padres continúan suministrando valiosa información sobre el contacto físico a medida que los niños crecen. Le decimos a un niño chico que es curioso: "Tú cuerpo te pertenece. Nadie tiene el derecho de tocarte sin tú permiso. Si alguna vez te sientes incomodo con las caricias di 'pare', y ven a contarme".

Los padres mandan otros mensajes cuando le dan un vocabulario a sus niños, y usan los nombres apropiados para las partes del cuerpo. Nombres simpáticos solo pueden ofuscar los hechos. Al usar palabras como "pene" y "vagina" los padres preparan a los niños a respetar sus cuerpos.

El modelo de la afección física demostrada por padres cariñosos, comunicación respetuosa entre padres y con los niños, son vitales para dar una sólida identidad sexual. Yo ciertamente quiero que mis niños vean respeto y límites saludables como modelos en nuestra casa.

Como ser un Padre Fácil de Preguntarle

A medida que los niños crecen sus pequeños cuerpos crecerán. Tendrán reguntas en la medida que transitan este camino y como padre, ellos necesitan que Ud. esté ahí para contestar muchas de esas preguntas. He aquí seis estrategias esenciales para convertirse en un padre fácil de preguntarle.

1) Comprométase a más de una discusión sobre la sexualidad. Una charla larga es, en realidad, contraproducente. Los niños necesitan conversar en stintos momentos sobre distintos temas. A medida que sus cuerpos cambian, a medida que las sensaciones sexuales se desarrollan y la curiosidad aumenta, los niños tienen que sentir que pueden acudir a sus padres en cualquier momento para obtener ayuda sobre estas preocupaciones. También deben poder hacer preguntas sobre lo que vieron en un programa de televisión o escucharon en la escuela.

Los niños pequeños quieren saber sobre las partes de su cuerpo, como funcionan, por qué ella tiene uno y el papi otro. Ud. puede decir "Tomás, la mamá no tiene pene como tú y papá. La mamá es mujer y las mujeres tienen vagina".

De la edad de dos hasta los cinco años la curiosidad sexual frecuentemente aumenta. Los padres quizás encontrarán a los niños involucrados en juegos que parecen tener un contenido sexual. Recientemente, un vecino vino a hacerme, a la "enfermera", una consulta. Ese día había encontrado a su niña de cuatro años jugando al "doctor" con una amiguita. Ambas niñas estaban desnudas y se estaban examinando. "Niñas, veo que están jugando al doctor. Estoy segura que es muy entretenido, pero tienen que ponerse la ropa. Uds. pueden tocarse sus propios cuerpos en la privacidad de sus dormitorios, pero no el cuerpo de otros". Mi vecina se preguntaba si había manejado la situación apropiadamente. "Sí", le aseguré. Los juegos sexuales son muy normales. Una sobrereacción como padre les envía a los niños el mensaje que están siendo malos. En vez, hable en un tono normal de voz y piense sobre sus expresiones faciales. Pero sobre todo, no entre en pánico. Recuerde, nuestros pequeñuelos son naturalmente curiosos y a esa edad, sus cuerpos están llenos de nuevas sensaciones y placer.

Si Ud. tiene más de un niño trate de hablarles por separado. Incluso sobre el mismo tema. Los niños más pequeños podrían fácilmente perder su "tiempo de transmitir" cuando un hermano con más volumen y conocimientos mete la cuchara.

2) Converse con su pareja sobre el tipo de información que quiere compartir. Discuta no solo quien enseña que, sino como contestar las preguntas, y que valores y moralidad de la familia será impartida. Este acuerdo puede disminuir mensajes contradictorios y otorgan una sesión de practica (y quizás también disminuyen la angustia). Trate de involucrar a ambos padres en este episodio de aprendizaje. La voz del padre, si está disponible, es importante para establecer la imagen positiva de los niños hacia su emergente identidad sexual.

A medida que Ud. piensa sobre estas conversaciones con los niños considere discutir esto con otros adultos que ya han manejado estos obstáculos con sus propios hijos, o con personas en las Ud. confía o admira como padres. El anticipo de la próxima etapa del desarrollo y de las preguntas que indudablemente surgirán también pueden evitar algo de la confusión y miedo que puede experimentar el niño.

Por ejemplo, los niños de dos a cuatro años necesitan una lección sobre lo privado. "Cuando veas la puerta del dormitorio de mamá y papá cerrada, quiero que toques la puerta. Todo el mundo necesita tiempo privado, por lo tanto nosotros también tocaremos cuando tu puerta este cerrada". Esta lección sobre límites plantea dos valores familiares importantes, la privacidad y el respeto.

3) Compre libros que la ayuden en su discusión. Pocos padres saben todo. Las bibliotecas y las librerías están llenas de libros apropiados para los niños y los padres.

¿Como se usan estos libros? Se les puede leer al niño como una manera de entrar en el tema y contestar sus preguntas. Ud. puede dejar que el libro se convierta en un recurso familiar, dejándolo en plena vista en el estante. Para esas veces cuando el niño quiera leer una sección en base a su actual nivel de interés, un padre "fácil de preguntarle" podría ofrecerse para discutir el material y aclarar cualquier información que parezca equivocada.

Los cuentos que escucho de padres en mi practica privada son, "Cuando era niña me dieron un libro y me dijeron "solo pregunta" si yo tenía alguna inquietud. Frecuentemente esta era la última vez que se mencionaba el libro". Por favor no cometan ese error. Lea el libro, sección por sección con el niño que es de espíritu más tranquilo, y aliéntela a leer una parte, para después conversarla juntos.

4) Busque "momentos aptos para aprender". Estos son los momentos cuando las lecciones sobre sexualidad podrían florecer. La vida en su barrio (la madre de un amigo queda embarazada) puede ser una excelente oportunidad para aprender.

Los niños también están bombardeados con fuertes mensajes sexuales por los medios de comunicación. Para poder contrarrestar esto, ponga atención a lo que ven en televisión y esté lista a comunicar sus propios valores y mensajes.

Recientemente my sobrina de cinco años, Rebeca, estaba mirando MTV con mi hija. Las canciones, la ropa, los movimientos de los cuerpos no eran lo más apropiado para ella. No era mi papel fijar un límite valórico con Rebeca, pero ya que estaba en mi casa con Jordan, mi hija de once años, lo manejé de la siguiente manera: "Jordan, no creo que Rebeca tiene suficiente edad para mirar MTV, ya que es demasiado sexualmente sugerente para ella. Veamos otro programa en vez de ese". Más tarde conversé con Jordan para explicarle mi preocupación sobre los movimientos, canciones y mensajes de contenido sexual que estaba presenciando. Esta madre ciertamente puede aseverar el hecho que el mismo tema plantea distintas lecciones en distintas edades.

Una regla importante para lecciones sobre el parto y el embarazo es si su niña no ha preguntado entre las edades de cinco y ocho años, Ud. tiene que darse el tiempo para tocar el tema. Dejar pasar el tiempo sin una conversación le dice a su niña que este no es un tema del cual se puede hablar, o que Ud. se siente demasiado incómoda para referirse a el.

Un programa de televisión puede iniciar este tema. Ud. puede preguntarle a su hijo, ¿"Qué pensaste sobre la reina en el dibujo animado. Tuvo un bebé. Cómo crees que se hacen los bebés"? Si la respuesta es "la cigüeña", Ud. tiene mucho espacio para discutir. Yo empezaría con sencillez: "Los padres tienen células de esperma y las madres tienen óvulos. Cuando el pene del hombre emite esperma en la vagina de la madre y esta encuentra un óvulo, ambas se convierten en un bebé". Si un niño quiere saber más preguntará.

Otra sugerencia sobre como encontrar tiempo para enseñarles a los niños se refiere a tiempo en el automóvil. El lugar mas importante donde los niños hacen preguntas es mientras están en el automóvil. ¿Por qué? Tiene a la madre prisionera. Uno no puede tomar el periódico, o dedicarle tiempo a otra actividad. Por lo tanto esté preparada.

5) Reconozca que habrán momentos de tensión. Quizás Ud. tendrá que aclarar sus ideas y aplacar sus nervios para después responderle a su hija. Pero nunca diga "hablaremos más tarde" para después evitar el tema. Ud. pierde credibilidad con sus hijos cuando evita sus preocupaciones. Está bien no ser experto. Las experiencias ricas entre hijos y padres ocurren cuando Ud. investiga un tema y ambos encuentran la respuesta.

A veces Ud. se sentirá avergonzada, y le faltará confianza para poder contestar la pregunta, o pensará que el niño no está listo para esa información. Estos son sentimientos normales. Pero no pueden impedirle conversar con sus hijos. Sea valiente y converse.

6) Conteste sólo la pregunta que se le plantea. Escuche cuidadosamente que le están preguntando. No de más información de la necesaria. Ud. quizás crea que esto le dará a su niña toda la información para que no se toque el tema otra vez, pero de hecho esto puede confundir y abrumar a la niña. Un ejemplo puede ser cuando su niña de cuatro años pregunta por qué la pareja en la tele están durmiendo juntos cuando no están casados? Un padre puede contestar, "Es verdad que algunas personas que no están casadas duermen juntos. Pero en nuestra familia creemos que uno debe esperar y primero casarse". Ud. ha suministrado información sobre valores familiares y contestado la pregunta. Si se necesitase más información, su niño preguntará.

La meta de ser un padre "fácil de preguntarle" es contestar preguntas e eliminar temor mientras que a la vez ayuda a la niña a construir auto estima y un imagen positiva de si misma. Es verdad que estos pueden ser momentos que producen angustia pero bien vale la pena invertir en su relación con sus hijos.

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Attention Deficit Disorders In Preschoolers

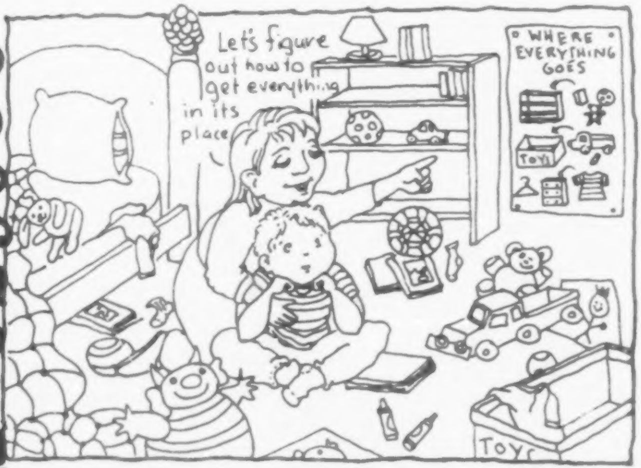
More and more children today seem to be labeled with Attention Deficit Disorder. Do all these children truly suffer from the effects of attention deficit disorders? Does Johnny have ADD, or is he just an active little boy? When Jenny is off in her own world, is she having attentional problems, or is she a dreamy, creative child? How is a parent to know what is usual, and what might be the product of an attentional /hyperactivity problem. Finally, what can a parent do to help a child who does have ADD?

What is ADD?

Although we often think of attention deficit disorder as one large category, in fact it is a cluster of different problems, often on a continuum from "only a little" to "a whole lot."

Hyperactivity Problems

For some children the problem with attention arises from excessive activity. These kids just can't sit still. When ADD occurs with hyperactivity we usually say these children have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).


Let's figure out how to get everything in its place
WHERE EVERYTHING GOES
TOYS
TOYS

A youngster with hyperactivity problems may not, for example, comply with the request of his teacher or parent to put a toy away. It's not that he doesn't want to do what he is asked but that his excessive activity level keeps getting in the way. Because they are always on the move, these youngsters have trouble paying attention to what parents and teachers are saying.

Children with ADHD can also be clumsy, bumping into doors and walls. They have a hard time managing themselves in their physical environment and moving smoothly. There may be more than the usual amount of spilt milk or dropped glasses around a child with ADHD.

Lack of Impulse Control

Another important aspect of attention problems comes from children's lack of impulse control. They can't seem to stop themselves from "jumping the gun." They frequently interrupt others or speak before thinking. Although all children have a hard time waiting in line, a child with a lack of impulse control may be exceptionally impatient about taking turns, grabbing a toy away from another child because it is too hard to wait for it. This isn't the same as a difficulty in sharing. These kids don't want to control the use of the toy and only enjoy it themselves, they simply find waiting intolerable.

Because these children can't wait they may demonstrate a flash-point loss of temper. Frustration overwhelms them. They may try to do a puzzle but a systematic search for the right piece is beyond them and, in an instant, they lose control and fling the puzzle aside.

Finally, their lack of self-control can combine with a love of excitement to override their good sense about safety. These youngsters can end up in one physically dangerous situation after another.

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Poor Organizational Capacity

Tasks that have several steps easily overwhelm and frustrate these children. The steps involved in putting away toys seem obvious to a parent, but an ADD youngster may have trouble figuring out what to do. A series of statements about getting ready for bed could be beyond a child's ability.

Another aspect of ADD is a particular difficulty making the transition from one activity to another. In the preschool this may be a refusal to stop playing and joining circle time.

Sometimes it isn't even a transition, but a change in an aspect of their environment - a new arrangement of furniture, or a switch in the order of events. You may have planned to go to the movies and then out for pizza but had to reverse that plan. Suddenly your youngster is throwing a tantrum and refusing to leave the house.

Finally, children with poor organizational capacity are easily distracted. It's hard for them to maintain their focus on the task-at-hand. They misplace things, forget things, start doing one thing and lose track in the middle when something catches their attention.

What Looks Like ADD But Isn't

Sometimes children appear to have the characteristics of ADD/ADHD but in fact, these behaviors have a totally different cause. Children who are suffering from high levels of stress, or other ongoing emotional problem, sometimes "look" as if they have ADD. An unusually anxious youngster may show her distress through behaviors that resemble those of ADD. She may be unable to sit still or concentrate. Changes in plans may be very upsetting.

For these youngsters, the principal problem is emotional; and assessment/evaluation and appropriate treatment will be different than for a child with ADD. This could include play therapy for the youngster to explore her concerns, a group therapy situation for children with similar problems, or family therapy in which the parents and child meet together with the therapist. Sometimes parents might be involved in consultations focused on their child's emotional symptoms and its causes.

Other children are naturally highly active. A young child who enjoys being active and prefers to be up-and-about is not necessarily an ADD child – even though it may make life a bit more difficult for a parent or teacher. Such children may be incorrectly identified as having attention problems when they are simply very active youngsters.

Also, children at different ages are capable of different levels of attention and "containing" body busyness. We shouldn't expect the same ability to maintain attention to tasks, and follow directions from a two-year-old as a five-year-old.

It can be difficult for parents to know what is age-appropriate and what is atypical behavior. It is useful to look at how your child compares to others his age, whether or not the behaviors are interfering with healthy peer relationships and learning, and affecting self-esteem. Talking with your pediatrician provides an objective opinion from a professional with extensive experience with children of all ages.

Not "Being Bad"

Your youngster is not "being bad" on purpose. ADD can cause problems that resemble intentional misbehavior. Actually, ADD children usually are working very hard to stay in control, and to pay attention. They may even go so far as to avoid situations in which they know they cannot do their best. ADD children aren't happy kids. They know something isn't quite right, but they don't know what to do. These children need understanding, patience, and structure.

☞ So, *punishment of an ADD child for ADD-based behaviors is rarely appropriate or effective.*

Diagnosing the ADDs

It is very important that a careful diagnosis be made by qualified professional, such as a child psychologist or psychiatrist, pediatric neurologist, or pediatrician. The diagnosing itself is usually a process during which the professional will consult with you, interview your child (sometimes in a playroom), and obtain information from the people most involved with your child (e.g. teachers, day care providers). This sounds like a lot of effort, but such care is necessary for an accurate diagnosis.

Helping Others Understand Your Child

If your child has been diagnosed with an ADD, you need to become an advocate, helping the people who take care of your child understand what the ADDs are, and especially that your youngster isn't "misbehaving" or failing to pay attention in order to be "difficult."

You can work with teachers and care providers to devise strategies that allow your child to manage himself better in the day care center or preschool.

You'll also need to advocate for your child in the family. Help siblings and extended family understand the nature of your child's difficulties, explaining ADD to them so that they can come to see your child not as a problem, but as someone who needs their support, coaching, and guidance.

Therapy Medication

Medication is frequently used to treat the ADDs although it is much less commonly prescribed in the preschool years. However, it is often effective, sometimes making a dramatic difference in a child's behavior. But, the medication is not curing your child's ADD. It is helping him manage the symptoms -- the hyperactivity, impulse control and organizational problems.

It is also essential to follow the dosage and administration schedule as prescribed by the pediatrician or child psychiatrist. And do tell the doctor about any side effects or changes in the effectiveness of the medication.

Behavioral Management

There are things you can do around the home to help your child. In fact, these are useful for all children, but especially for those who have an ADD.

It is helpful to emphasize the positive with these youngsters, telling them what you would *like* them to do rather than telling them what they are doing wrong. These children also respond well to structure, consistency, and routines. It helps them feel secure and organized. Of course, there should be room for flexibility, but within the context of structure.

For example, a disorganized youngster who can not find her clothes in the morning will appreciate picture labels on her dresser drawers showing her what is inside each one.

Regular morning and bedtime rituals also help your youngster move smoothly from one activity to another. For example, an evening routine could be taking a bath, brushing teeth, hearing a story, going to bed – always in the same order.

Give advance warning. Another way to ease the transition from one activity to another, or from being at home to leaving the house, is to alert him five to ten minutes in advance, and then again two to three minutes before its time to go.

Provide step-by-step directions for complex tasks, and give one direction at a time. If you want to move your youngster from playing with blocks to getting out the door, rather than saying "okay it's time to go. Put your blocks away, put on your coat and gloves" try stating these one at a time. Give your youngster a chance to finish one task before going on to the next.

Play Therapy

In addition to medication, therapy is very helpful for preschoolers. It's not easy to have an ADD and it often creates problems with children's sense of their own worth. They hear they are bad, or misbehave, or can't do things right. Then they begin to think of themselves in negative ways. The symptoms of ADD often interfere with their ability to make and keep friends. There is anxiety around how they do their chores, their school work, play with their friends.

Aa Bb Cc Dd
orange
red
yellow
green

Preschoolers can become locked into provocative, negative behaviors. It's as if once they think of themselves as unworthy, or bad, they go out and make it happen through their actions. They may be destructive and defiant. What had started out as a symptom of ADD has now become part of a child's daily behavior.

Therapy for these youngsters is often through play. Young children can express their worries, their wish for mastery, their fears and their opinions about themselves through games, drawing, and dramatic activities with toy figures. The therapist will also work with parents, usually in separate sessions, to help them intervene more effectively at home with their youngster.

Occupational Therapy

There are some children with an ADD who will benefit from occupational therapy. In these cases, professionals work with specially designed equipment to help children develop a better sense of their own bodies and how they work. They help children develop and strengthen muscle systems and improve their coordination.

Parenting, however rewarding, is never easy. It can be particularly challenging to be the parent of a preschooler with an ADD, requiring extra energy, patience, forbearance, and fortitude. When the going gets rough, remember that children with an ADD also bring something very special into our lives – enthusiasm, energy, an abundance of ideas, and a zest for life.

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NOT JUST FOR KIDS: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) in Adults

AD/HD has been recognized and treated in children for almost a century, but the realization that AD/HD often persists into adulthood has only come over the last few decades. The prevailing belief among professionals for many years was that children and adolescents would outgrow their symptoms by puberty, and certainly by adulthood. However, contemporary research has shown that some children diagnosed with AD/HD can continue to have symptoms of the disorder that significantly interfere with functioning in their adult lives.

AD/HD in adults is sometimes viewed as a "hidden disorder" because the symptoms are often obscured by problems with relationships, mood disorders, substance abuse, and employment or other difficulties. Sometimes, it is recognized in a parent only after the child is diagnosed. Despite increased awareness of the disorder in adults, many remain unidentified and untreated.

Characteristics of Adults with AD/HD

The features of AD/HD can range from mild to severe and can affect academic, social and vocational functioning, as well as daily living. Since the symptoms are common to many other conditions as well as to some life stressors, adults should seek a comprehensive evaluation from a qualified professional.

Some of the current diagnostic criteria for AD/HD include:

- Failing to give close attention to details or making careless mistakes at work
- Fidgeting with hands or feet or squirming in seat
- Having difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or fun activities
- Failing to follow through on instructions and failing to finish work
- Difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Feeling "on the go" or "driven by a motor"
- Talking excessively
- Losing things necessary for task and activities
- Blurting out answers before questions have been completed
- Being easily distracted
- Having difficulty waiting

What Causes AD/HD?

To date, there are no biological, physiological, or genetic markers that can reliably identify the disorder, however, there is little question that heredity makes the largest contribution to the expression of AD/HD.

In instances where heredity does not seem to be a factor, difficulties during pregnancy and birth, prenatal exposure to alcohol and tobacco, excessive lead levels in the body, and injury to specific regions of the brain have all been found to contribute to the risk of for AD/HD to varying degrees.

Research does **not** support the popularly held views that AD/HD arises from excessive sugar intake, food additives, excessive viewing of television, poor child management by parents, or social and environmental factors such as poverty or family chaos.

Diagnosis of AD/HD in Adults

A clinician or a team of clinicians who have experience and expertise in AD/HD and related conditions should make a comprehensive evaluation. This usually requires one or two hours at minimum and should rely on several informants (a parent if possible, or a significant other) and survey behavior from multiple settings (i.e., school, work, home).

A comprehensive evaluation is needed to: establish an accurate diagnosis; evaluate for the presence of co-existing medical or educationally disabling conditions; and rule out alternative explanations for relationship, occupational, or academic difficulties.

Why Identify AD/HD in Adults?

Growing up with undiagnosed AD/HD can have devastating effects on the adult. For some, the diagnosis and education that follows an evaluation can be a profoundly healing experience. Proper diagnosis can help adults put difficulties in perspective and better understand the reasons for many lifelong symptoms. Adults with AD/HD have often developed negative perceptions of themselves as "lazy," "stupid," or even "crazy." Proper diagnosis and effective treatment can help improve self-esteem, work performance and skills, educational attainment, and social competencies.

After Diagnosis, What Then?

Although there is no cure for AD/HD, many treatments can help manage its symptoms. Just as there is no single test to diagnose AD/HD, no single approach is appropriate for everyone. However, several studies suggest that counseling which offers support and education can be effective in treating adults with AD/HD.

Excerpted and adapted with permission from Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD).

❖ Need more information about AD/HD or the national organization dedicated to helping children and adults with AD/HD succeed? Contact: Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD); 8181 Professional Place, Suite 201, Landover, MD 20785; www.chadd.org - phone: (800) 233-4050, (301) 306-7070 fax: (301) 306-7090

Books for Active Kids

For Adults:

🕮 *Taking Charge of ADHD* by Russell A. Barkley, PhD; The Guilford Press; New York, 1995; Softcover, $17.95. Written by one of the experts in the field, the book starts with a description of the disorder, moves to theories and causes, and provides an overview of what to expect when your child has ADHD. It also discusses "taking charge" with chapters such as deciding to have your child evaluated, coping with the diagnosis, and guiding principles for raising a child with ADHD. Chock full of useful information, well-written and thorough.

For Kids:

🕮 *Can't Sit Still* by Karen E. Lotz; illustrated by Colleen Browning; Puffin Unicorn; New York, 1993; Paperback, $5.99. Despite the title, this isn't a book about attention-deficit, hyperactive children. It is about the joys of exploring a city neighborhood, dancing, skipping, hopping through the seasons.

🕮 *Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!* by Mem Fox; illustrated by Marla Frazee; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA, 2000; Hardcover, $16.00. "Harriet Harris was a pesky child. She didn't mean to be. She just was." Harriet gets into one kind of trouble after another. She doesn't do any of it on purpose, it just happens. Eventually her mother's patience wears thin and she yells and screams. The book ends with mother and daughter understanding that, for some children, things just happen.

🕮 *Help in on the Way: A child's book about ADD*; Marc A. Nemiroff, PhD and Jane Annunziata, PsyD; illustrated by Margaret Scott; Magination Press (the American Psychological Association), Washington, DC.; Hardcover. One of the few nonfiction books for children, it describes what the ADDs are and how kids may act and feel when they have an ADD.

🕮 *Waiting for Mr. Goose* by Laurie Lears; illustrated by Karen Ritz; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1999; Hardcover, $14.95. Stephen has a hard time waiting. He's always on-the-go and sometimes feels as if he can't do anything right. One day he notices a goose with a metal trap caught on its leg, making the goose limp and putting it in danger. Stephen knows the goose needs to get used to having him around before he can remove the trap. That will take patience. As difficult as it is for Stephen, he slowly befriends the goose and saves him. The book comes with a note about ADHD from the author.

And Don't Forget:

🕮 *Sit Still!* by Nancy Carlson; Pubbin Books; New York, 1996; Softcover, $5.99. "Patrick knew 101 different ways to sit in a chair." Patrick is a fine, healthy boy, but he just can't sit still, and everyone tells him to do just that. But when his mother gives him things to do, and Patrick learns to use all that energy, he finds a good side to not sitting still. (Originally reviewed March, 1999)

Dear Reader ...

There seems to be an epidemic of kids who can't sit still, or have difficulty concentrating. Some of these children undoubtedly have a disorder that is sometimes called attention deficit disorder (ADD), and other times attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Other children are just very active, too active for places that require youngsters to sit still and pay attention. The labels and the language professionals use can get confusing. The goal, however, is always to understand our kids better and work with them more effectively.

How do you know if your child has this disorder, or is just naturally active, bored sitting still, or stressed out? If your child does have an ADD, what can you do about it? And, if your child has an ADD, can you possibly have one too?

This month, we take a look at this issue affecting children not just in grade school, but reaching downwards to the preschool. Drs. Marc Nemiroff, and Jane Annunziata have written a wonderful comprehensive article for parents on the ADDs that will help answer these questions.

When many of us were growing up no one really thought about the ADDs. But kids with this disorder become adults who could have an ADD. Check out Not Just for Kids to learn more about it.

It's another full issue with recipes and reminiscence by Sandy Allen, and reviews of books of all kinds.

Neala Schwartzberg

American Academy of Pediatrics, ADHD, and School-Age Children

In May, 2000 the American Academy of Pediatrics released its recommendations for the assessment of school-age children with attention-deficity/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD). They acknowledged that 4 - 12% of all school-age children may have this disorder. To learn more about these guidelines, visit the AAP website and view their press release at:

www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/mayadhd.htm or contact the American Academy of Pediatrics at 141 Northwest Point Blvd., Elk Grove, IL 60007; phone: 847-981-7131

Tips for a Happy and Safe Halloween

All parents remember those innocent days of trick-or-treating through the dark streets of our neighborhood. We all recall the shivery-scary feeling when a shadowy figure opened a door and offered us our choice of candy. Today parents are torn between allowing our children the chance to create those same memories and keeping our kids safe from pranks, accidents, or dangerous situations.

Here's a short checklist parents can use to be sure their kids can have a safe and happy Halloween:

☑ **Check costumes carefully.** Don't use masks. They can obstruct a child's vision. How about trying face paint this year? Choose non-toxic, hypoallergenic make-up or face paint and help your child create the effect he wants.

Costumes must be flame-retardant, not too loose or too tight. Do not allow kids to use oversize shoes, high heels, or skirts or pants that are too long.

☑ **Be sure clothing is reflective.** Children who are trick-or-treating after dark must carry flashlights, wear light colored, reflective clothing or use reflective tape on bags, hats, hemlines, and chest. The Medical Society of the State of New York advises the use of reflective tape at all times of poor visibility.

☑ **No preschool child should ever trick-or-treat without adult supervision.** A parent or other responsible adult should always accompany trick-or-treaters.

☑ **Talk about Halloween and plan carefully.** Go over rules with kids regarding crossing streets only at the corners and being sure to look both ways before crossing any street. Children should not be allowed to trick-or-treat in areas where there is no sidewalk. Plan your child's trick or treat stops. Go over which houses they will visit. Be sure that they know not to visit homes where there is no porch light or outside light on. Make sure children know never to approach strangers or animals. Even well-known, friendly pets get skittish when there is a lot of activity going on in the dark neighborhood.

☑ **Be sure that children know they must never eat any treat they receive until you or another responsible adult has inspected it.** Look for signs of tampering and never let young children have treats that might present a choking hazard. Watch for large gumballs, hard candies, and small toys.

In addition, be sure that you have made your own home safe for trick-or-treaters. Make sure no obstacles or impediments, block stairways, decks, porches, or sidewalks. Put away bicycles, garden tools, and outdoor furniture. Decorations should be used in ways that don't present an impediment in the darkness. Clean piles of leaves and branches off the walkways and see that outside lights are working. If sidewalks are broken, make complete repairs well in advance of Halloween. Never use fire in your outside decorations, instead use flashlights to create the special, desired decorative effects.

Finally, consider having a "Greet the Trick or Treaters" party in your own home. Let your children create their own outfits and then they can answer the door in costume. Perhaps you can invite a few of their friends to join them in the fun.

With just a little care, Halloween can be as much fun as we remembered from our own youth. Our kids can then create their own Halloween memories that will last a lifetime.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

BOOks for the Season

For Adults:

📖 ***Halloween Program Sourcebook*** edited by Sue Ellen Thompson; illustrated by Mary Ann Stavros-Lanning; Omnigraphics, Inc.; Detroit, MI, 2000; Hardcover $48. A book about Halloween filled with stories and legends, poems, plays, activities and recipes from the 18th century to the present day.

For Kids:

📖 ***Halloween Day*** by Anne Rockwell; pictures by Lizzy Rockwell; HarperCollins; New York, 1997; Softcover, $5.95. If your child's school or child care center will be celebrating Halloween with a costume party, this is the book to introduce the idea to your youngster. Everyone comes to school dressed up, both the children and the teachers.

📖 ***It's Pumpkin Time!*** by Zoe Hall; illustrated by Shari Halpern; Scholastic; New York, 1994; Softcover. $5.99. How do the pumpkins that we turn in jack-o'-lanterns grow? This books describes how seeds are planted, watered and eventually – It's Pumpkin Time.

📖 ***Woo! The not-so-scary ghost*** by Ana Martin Larranaga; Arthur A. Levine Books (Scholastic Press); New York; 2000; Hardcover $15.95. Woo is a good little ghost who wants to be big and scary. He packs his bag and goes off to frighten the locals, but as the sun rises he becomes scared. Things go from bad to worse. A goat wants to eat him. A dog wants to chase him. He ends up wash, dried and ironed. Finally, he makes it back home. "Even scary ghosts love home sweet home, thinks Woo."

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Autumn is here, a wonderful season of the year. There is an earthy smell of leaves packed down on the ground; flocks of geese in a "V" formation migrating to the South. It's a good time to nestle with your little one, drink a hot cup of cocoa, and nibble on these delicious cookies that you made together.

These two recipes are from Brazil, from the old colonial times in the 1700s when sugar production was abundant. I learned to make them in my culinary school days. We usually made them once a week. It was a lot of work because we had to use the outside brick-domed oven. We had to burn the logs, clean out the oven, and then wait until the right temperature was achieved.

We baked bread first, when the oven was the hottest. Then we arranged the cookies inside the oven. We had to keep sniffing by the oven door to make sure everything was baking properly because we had no way to control the temperature and the cookies could easily burn. I am very thankful for today's inside ovens, with temperature controls.

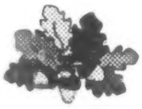
Brazilian Peanut Butter Cookies

Biscoito De Amendoin, Brasileiro

- Utensils: baking sheets, electric mixer, large bowl, medium bowl, spatula, measuring cups, measuring spoons.
- Ingredients:

1-½ cups all-purpose flour
1-½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup soft butter (1 stick)
1 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
2 cups chunky peanut butter
2 tablespoons finely grated orange peel
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup shelled peanuts, skin removed

ADULT: Preheat oven to 400 F.
CHILD: Measure the flour, baking powder, and salt into the medium size bowl. Place butter in the larger bowl. Add the sugar to the butter.
ADULT: Grate the orange skin and set it aside. Beat the butter and sugar until creamy. Add one egg at a time beating well. Add the peanut butter and mix well.
CHILD: Add the orange peel, and vanilla.
ADULT: Continue mixing until well blended. Now add the flour mixture ½ cup at a time, mixing well. Add the whole peanuts.
CHILD AND ADULT: Drop the cookie mixture by tablespoonfuls on the sheet about ½ inch apart. Bake in the preheated oven for about 18 minutes, or until cookies are golden brown.
ADULT: Remove the cookie sheet from the oven and let cool on the sheet for about 5 minutes. Then transfer them to a wire rack. Cookies can be stored in an airtight jar. Makes about 3-½ dozen.



Coconut Cookies

Bolachinhas De Coco

This recipe is a little more work, but I know that you will have a fantastic time making them. I imagine flour all over and lots of finger licking. These cookies have a heavenly aroma when baking, and are delicious!

- Utensils: baking sheets, oil spray to coat the sheets, medium bowl, large bowl, electric mixer, measuring cups, and measuring spoons, rolling pin, spatula, and wooden spoon.
- Ingredients:

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 cups unsweetened grated coconut
½ cup unsalted butter (1 stick)
1-½ cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs
3/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon coconut extract
1 cup coarse sugar

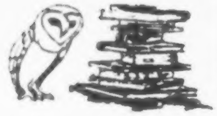
ADULT: Preheat oven to 400 F.
CHILD: Coat the baking sheets with the oil spray and set them aside. Measure the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and grated coconut into the medium size bowl. Set it aside. Place butter in the large bowl. Mix granulated sugar into the butter.
ADULT: Beat the butter/sugar mixture with the electric mixer until creamy. Add 1 egg at the time beating well after each addition. Add the milk, and the coconut extract beating well. Now start adding the flour mixture and mixing well with the wooden spoon after each addition. If the dough is too soft add a little more flour to it.
ADULT AND CHILD: Place the dough on a clean flat surface, sprinkle with a little flour. Now roll out the dough with floured rolling pin to ¼ inch thick. Cut into desired shapes with cookie cutter. Sprinkle the coarse sugar over the cookies. Arrange them on the prepared baking sheets.
ADULT: Place the baking sheet in the oven. Bake for about 15 to 18 minutes, or until the cookies are golden in color. Remove from the oven and let cool for about 5 minutes. With a spatula remove them from the baking sheet, and place on wire rack to cool. Store in an air tight jar. Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

Now, grab a bunch of cookies, a glass of milk, and sit down and enjoy the fruits of your labor. Yummy!

Sandra N. Allen

Moving?

Send your address changes to: *Parent & preschooler*; NSC&FGC; 480 Old Westbury Rd.; Roslyn Hgts., NY 11577-2215; Attn: Subscriptions Dept.



Library Resources

Wisdom from Books

🕮 ***Adventure on Klickitat Island*** by Hilary Horder Hippely; illustrated by Barbara Upton; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.99; Paperback $5.99 through Puffin Books, New York. A raging storm is endangering the animals on Klickitat Island, so a young boy and his bear go off to help. Everyone works together to build a shelter. Then, while the wind howls, and the rain pours the boy and the animals are safe, cuddled up together.

🕮 ***Amazing Grace*** by Mary Hoffman; Pictures by Caroline Binch; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1991; Hardcover, $16.99. For all children who have dreams, goals, and ambitions. Her classmates tell Grace that she can't be Peter Pan because she's a girl, and she's Black. But her family says "You can be anything you want, Grace, if you put your mind to it." And she does, becoming Peter Pan in the school play.

🕮 ***I Did it, I'm Sorry*** by Caralyn Buehner; illustrated by Mark Buehner; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.99. What to do when faced with moral dilemmas? The animal characters have to decide about honesty, dependability, consideration for others. A perfect way to begin discussions about these, and other, crucial values.

🕮 ***It's a Spoon, Not a Shovel*** by Caralyn Buehner; illustrated by Mark Buehner; Puffin Books; New York, 1995; Softcover, $5.99. A humorous book about manners and how to behave by the same team that created *I Did it, I'm Sorry*.

🕮 ***Lessons from the Hundred-Acre Wood***: Stories, verse & wisdom by Hallie Marshall; illustrated by John Kurtz; Disney Press; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $12.99. Some stories are created to delight the reader, other stories are created to enlighten. Then, there are the tales that do both. Winnie the Pooh and his friends have long entertained children, often with a hint of "the moral of this story." This collection highlights the gentle wisdom inherent in the charming adventures. A lovely book for everyone.

🕮 ***Muppet Manners*** by Ellen Weiss; illustrated by Richard Brown; Puffin; New York, 1999; Lift-the-flap, $6.99. The Muppets show Animal how to behave in the library, waiting on line for a movie, eating dinner and more, with a touch of good humor.

🕮 ***The Real Winner*** by Charise Neugebauer; illustrated by Barbara Nascimbeni; North-South Books, Inc.; New York, 2000; Hardcover $15.88. No one wants to play with Rocky. He makes everything into a contest and if he loses, he whines. One day Humphrey takes Rocky fishing and Rocky is being annoying, as usual. But Humphrey demonstrates caring and compassion to all the animals. He's even patient with Rocky. Finally, Rocky realizes that winning isn't really everything.

🕮 ***Toot & Puddle*** by Holly Hobbie; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1997; Hardcover, $12.95. It's the story of two friends one who loves to stay home, and the other who loves to travel. They both have wonderful adventures because it's important to be yourself, and to be a good friend.

in coming months ...

- Reading Readiness
- Surprise! You're A Parent
- Social Studies

I think they ought to subscribe to the Parent & Preschooler Newsletter

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

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El Trastorno de Déficit de Atención en el Pre-escolar

Hoy en día se dice que cada vez más y más niños tienen Trastorno de Déficit de Atención (TDA). Pero en realidad padecen todos estos niños de los efectos de ese trastorno? Tiene Johnny TDA, o es solamente un pequeño muy activo? Cuando Jenny está inmersa en su propio mundo, está sufriendo de problemas de atención, o es que ella es una niña soñadora y creativa? Cómo pueden los padres saber qué es normal, y qué puede ser producto de un problema de atención o de hiperactividad. Finalmente, qué puede hacer un padre cuyo hijo tiene TDA?

Qué es TDA?

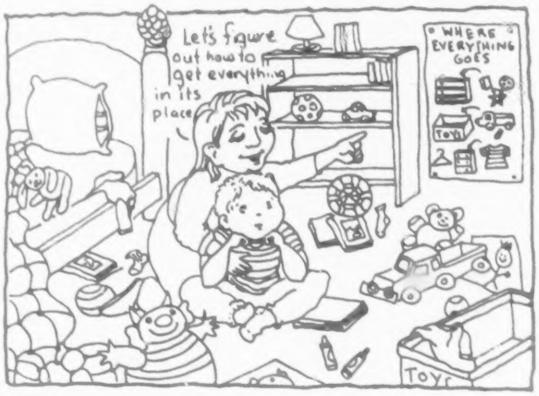
A menudo se cree que el trastorno de déficit de atención es una sólo gran categoría, sin embargo, está constituido de una serie de problemas diferentes, que se pueden manifestar desde "un poquito" hasta "bastante".

El problema de la hiperactividad.

Para algunos niños el problema de falta de atención surge de un exceso de actividad. Estos niños no pueden quedarse quietos. Cuando está presente el TDA conjuntamente con la hiperactividad, se dice que el niño tiene un trastorno de déficit de atención hiperactiva (TDAH).

Un pequeño hiperactivo puede que no obedezca a su profesora o a sus padres cuando le piden que guarde un juguete. No es que no quiera hacerlo, sino que su altísimo nivel de actividad se lo impide. Como estos niños se están moviendo constantemente, tienen dificultades para poner atención a lo que sus padres y profesores les dicen.

Los niños con TDAH también pueden ser torpes, chocan contra las puertas y las paredes. Les cuesta controlarse a sí mismos y moverse calmadamente en su entorno físico. Puede que haya una mayor cantidad de leche regada o vasos rotos alrededor de un niño con TDAH.


Let's figure out how to get everything in its place
WHERE EVERYTHING GOES
TOYS
TOYS

Falta de control sobre los impulsos:

Un importante razgo del problema de la falta de atención surge de la incapacidad del niño para controlar su impulsos. Parece que el niño no puede controlar sus ganas de "adelantarse" a las cosas. Interrumpe a los demás frecuentemente y habla sin pensar. Aunque todos los niños tiene dificultades para esperar en la linea en forma tranquila, un niño que no puede controlar sus impulsos puede ser excepcionalmente impaciente cuando tiene que turnarse con los demás, arrancando el juguete de las manos del otro porque esperar hasta que se lo den, resulta demasiado difícil. Esto no es lo mismo que no saber compartir. El niño que no controla sus impulsos, no quiere controlar el uso del juguete para que sólo él lo pueda disfrutar, sino simplemente que esperar es algo intolerable.

Ya que estos niños no pueden esperar, se irritan y se ponen de mal humor. La frustración los

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abruma. Pueden intentar armar un rompecabezas pero la búsquedad calmada de la pieza precisa está más allá de sus capacidades, y en un instante pierden el control y arrojan el rompecabezas a un lado.

Finalmente, la falta de control que tiene sobre sí mismo combinado con gusto por lo que es excitante, pueden hacer que el niño pierda el sentido de seguridad. Estos pequeños terminan en un situación peligrosa tras otra.

Falta de capacidad para organizar

Tareas que implican varios pasos a seguir abruma y frustran facilmente a estos niños. Los pasos que se deben seguir para guardar los juguetes le parecen obvio a los padres, pero un niño con TDA tiene problemas para resolver lo que debe hacer. Enumerarle un listado extenso de todo lo que tiene que hacer antes de irse a dormir va más allá de las habilidades del niño.

Otro aspecto de TDA es que el niño tiene dificultades para hacer la transición de una actividad a otra. En la pre-escuela esto puede significar que el niño no quiere dejar de jugar con un camión para ir a jugar a la ronda con los demás.

A veces ni siquiera es la transición, sino que es un cambio en el entorno físico - los muebles ordenados de manera diferente, o un cambio en el orden de las actividades. Usted puede haber planeado ir al cine y después ir a comer pizza, pero luego tuvo que hacer las cosas al revés. De repente al pequeño le dio una rabieta y rehusa salir de la casa.

Finalmente, los niños que no pueden organizarse se distraen con facilidad. Les resulta difícil mantener la concentración en lo que están haciendo. Pierden objetos, son olvidadizos, y comienzan a hacer una cosa y después la dejan de lado por algo que les llamó más la atención.

Lo que parece TDA pero no lo es.

A veces parece que un niño tiene las características de un pequeño con TDA/TDAH pero en realidad, su comportamiento tiene una explicación completamente diferente. Los niños que sufren de un alto nivel de estrés, o que están pasando por un problema emocional, a veces "parece" que tuvieran TDA. Un pequeño inusualmente ansioso puede demostrarlo por medio de un comportamiento similar al que tiene un niño con TDA, por ejemplo, no quedarse quieto o no poder concentrarse. Para ellos un cambio de planes puede ser muy desagradable.

Para estos niños, el problema principal es emocional; y una evaluación así como el tratamiento apropiado serán diferentes al de un pequeño con TDA. Puede incluir la terapia de juego para que se investigue lo que al niño le preocupa, una terapia de grupo para que conozca a otros niños que sufren de lo mismo, o la terapia familiar en la que él se reune con sus padres y el terapeúta. A veces, los padres pueden ir a consultas para aprender sobre los síntomas emocionales del niño y sus causas.

Otros niños son naturalmente muy activos. Un niño que disfruta siendo activo y que prefiere andar de arriba a abajo no es necesariamente un niño con TDA–aunque le haga la vida un poquito más complicada a sus padres y al profesor. A veces se dice, equivocadamente, que esos niños tienen problemas de atención, cuando la verdad es que sólo son niños muy activos.

A distantes edades, el niño es capaz de alcanzar diferentes niveles de concentración y de "contener" a su cuerpo. No debemos pretender que un niño de dos años de edad se mantenga concentrado en una tarea y pueda seguir instrucciones, de la misma manera en que lo haría un niño de cinco.

Puede ser difícil para los padres el saber que tipo de comportamiento va de acuerdo a la edad y que conductas son atípicas. Es útil observar como es su niño en relación a los demás de la misma edad y si su conducta le impide o no tener una relación saludable con los otros niños, o si le influye en el aprendizaje o le está afectando la autoestima. Hablar con su pediatra le dará un opinión objetiva de un profesional que tiene experiencia con niños de cualquier edad.

Diagnosticando el TDA.

Es muy importante que el diagnóstico lo haga un profesional calificado, como un psícologo infantíl o un psiquiatra, un pediatra especializado en neurología o un pediatra. El diagnóstico en sí es generalmente un proceso durante el cual el profesional hablará con usted, entrevistará al niño (a veces en una sala de juegos) y obtendrá información de las personas que más se relacionan con su hijo (los profesores o la proveedora de cuidado diario). Parece mucho esfuerzo, pero todo ese tipo de cuidados son necesarios para que el diagnóstico sea lo más exacto posible.

Ayudando a que los demás comprendan a su niño.

Si su niño ha sido diagnosticado con TDA usted necesita trabajar activamente en eso, y ayudar a que las personas que lo cuidan entiendan lo que es el TDA, y sobretodo, que el niño no está "portándose mal" y que si no pone atención no es porque sea un niño "difícil". Usted puede trabajar con la profesora y la proveedora de cuidado diario para elaborar estrategias que permitan que el niño se maneje mejor en la guardería o en la pre-escuela.

También necesita ayudar a su niño al interior de su familia. Ayude a que sus hermanos y hermanas y a que los demás parientes entiendan sobre la naturaleza de las dificultades del niño, explicándoles sobre el TDA de manera que puedan ver al pequeño no como un problema, sino como alguien que necesita de su apoyo, de su entrenamiento y de su guía.

Terapia de medicamentos

Los medicamentos son usados frecuentemente para tratar el TDA, aunque no se prescriben comunmente cuando se trata de un pre-escolar. Sin embargo, pueden ser efectivos, produciendo a veces, un cambio dramático en la conducta del pequeño. Pero la medicina no cura el TDA. Ayuda a que él maneje los síntomas–la hiperactividad, la falta de control de sus impulsos y los problemas de organización.

Es muy importante administrar la dósis exacta y a las horas indicadas, tal cual lo prescibió el pediatra o el psiquiatra, y decirle sobre cualquier efecto secundario o de cambios que habría producido la medicina en el niño.

Manejar la conducta del niño.

Hay cosas que usted puede hacer en la casa para ayudar a su niño. Además son útiles para todos los niños, pero específicamente para aquellos con TDA.

Ayuda bastante el enfatizar las cosas positivas cuando se trata del niño, explicándole lo que a usted le gustaría que hiciera, en vez de hacer hincapié en lo que está haciendo mal. Estos niños responden bien a las estructuras, a la consistencia y a las rutinas. Les hacen sentir más seguros y organizados. Por supuesto, hay que ser flexible, pero siempre dentro del contexto de lo estructurado.

Por ejemplo, a un pequeño desorganizado que no puede encontrar su ropa en la mañana, se le puede ayudar pegando etiquetas con dibujos en sus cajones, de manera que le recuerden que es lo que hay dentro de cada uno.

Las rutinas diarias, durante la mañana y luego a la hora de dormir ayudan a que el niño cambie tranquilamente de una actividad a otra. Por ejemplo, una rutina antes de acostarse puede ser el bañarse, lavarse los dientes, escuchar un cuento y luego ir a dormir–siempre en ese mismo orden.

Advertir con anticipación. Esta es otra forma the facilitar el cambio de una actividad a otra, como estar en la casa y después salir. Es por medio de la advertencia unos cinco a diéz minutos antes. Recuérdele otra vez dos o tres minutos antes de la salida.

Entréguele indicaciones, una a la vez, y paso por paso, cuando se trata de tareas complicadas. Si usted quiere que el niño deje de jugar con los bloques de madera para que salga de la casa, en vez de decirle, "es tiempo de irnos. Guarda tus bloques, ponte el abrigo y los guantes", trate de decirle los mismo pero una cosa a la vez. Proporciónele al niño la oportunidad de terminar una tarea antes de comenzar con la próxima.

Aa Bb Cc Dd
orange
red
yellow
green
A

La terapia de juego

Además de los medicamentos, la terapia ayuda mucho al pre-escolar. No es fácil la vida con TDA, a menudo le crea al niño un problema de estima personal. Escuchan que son malos, que se portan mal o que no pueden hacer las cosas bien. Luego comienzan a pensar sobre sí mismos de forma negativa. Los síntomas de TDA a menudo interfieren con su habilidad para hacer amigos y mantenerlos. Estos niños sienten ansiedad cuando hacen diferentes tareas, cuando realizan el trabajo de la escuela y cuando juegan con sus amigos.

El pre-escolar puede quedar atrapado en una conducta provocativa y negativa. Pareciera que una vez que cree que es indigno y malo, tiene que salir y comportarse de esa manera. Pueden ser destructivos y provocadores. Lo que comenzó inicialmente como síntoma de TDA se ha convertido en parte del comportamiento diario del niño.

Para estos niños, la terapia consiste en jugar. Los niños pequeños pueden expresar sus preocupaciones, sus ganas de ser hábiles, sus temores y su opinión sobre ellos mismos por medio de los juegos, los dibujos y las actividades con figuras de juguete. El terapeúta, trabajará con los padres, generalmente en un sesión a parte, para que ellos pueden ayudar y trabajar de manera más eficiente con el niño cuando está en casa.

Terapia ocupacional

Hay algunos niños con TDA que se beneficiarán de la terapia ocupacional. En estos casos, algunos profesionales trabajan con equipos especialmente diseñados para ayudar a que el niño logre un mejor sentido de su cuerpo y de como funciona éste. Ayudan a que el niño desarrolle y fortalezca el sistema muscular y a que mejoren su coordinación.

El ser padre, aunque tiene muchas recompensas, no es fácil. Puede ser bastante desafiante ser el padre de un pre-escolar que tiene TDA; requiere más energía, más paciencia, dominio sobre sí mismo y fortaleza. Cuando las cosas se ponen duras, recuerde que los niños con TDA también traen algo muy especial a nuestras vidas--entusiasmo, energía, una abundancia de ideas y un gusto por la vida.

Marc A Nemiroff tiene un doctorado en psicología clínica y es integrante del cuerpo docente del programa Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health del Washington School of Psychiatry y cuerpo docente clínico del programa de doctorado en psicología de la Universidad George Washington. Durante mucho tiempo ha trabajado con niños y sus familias en varios escenarios clínicos y tiene una consulta privada en

Potomac, Maryland.

Jane Annunziata tiene un doctorado en psicología clínica y actualmente es cuerpo docente clínico adjunto en el programa de doctorado en psicología de la universidad George Washington. La doctora Annunziata tiene un consulta privada que se especializa en el trabajo con niños y familias en McLean, Virginia. Es autora de Solving Your Problems Together: Family Therapy for the Whole Family (con Phyllis Jacobson-Kram, 1994)

Los doctores Nemiroff y Annunziata han escrito también A Child's First Book About Play Therapy (1990), y Why Am I an Only Child?(1998) Este artículo es una adaptación del libro "For Parents and Guardians" que originalmente apareció en Help is on the Way: A Child's Book About TDA de Marc A. Nemiroff, Ph.D y Jane Annunziata, Psy.D., publicado por el American Psychological Association (APA), Copyright ©1998 por el American Psychological Association. Se pueden adquirir copias de "Help is on the Way" llamando al (800) 374-2721; o escribiendo al APA Order Department,PO Box 92984, Washington, DC 20090-2984

No "está siendo malo"

Su niño no "está siendo malo" a propósito. El TDA puede causar problemas que se asemejan a una mala conducta intencional. Generalmente, los niños con TDA se esfuerzan mucho para mantener el control de sí mismos y poner atención. Pueden hasta tratar de evitar situaciones en las que saben que no pueden manejarse. Los niños que padecen TDA no son felíces. Saben que hay algo que no marcha bien, pero no saben que hacer. Necesitan comprensión, paciencia y una estructura en su vida . Así es que el castigar a un niño con TDA por un conducta propia del TDA no es apropiado ni tampoco es efectivo.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp
Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 15, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* November 2000

ABCs of Children and Reading

It's early morning at the neighborhood preschool. Jonathan, the little boy in the red plaid shirt, is doing karate chops in the middle of the floor. He's also the first one to line up for outdoor playtime. He wants to be sure he's able to jump on one of the two-wheelers waiting in the paved area of the play yard.

Now, look at Jessica, the girl wearing purple ribbons in her dark, curly hair. As she's walking around the room she suddenly stops to read the letters S_T_O_P from a sign on the bulletin board. "That word says STOP," she proudly reports. Jessica is obviously showing some readiness for learning to read. But what about Jonathan? He starts kindergarten next year too.

Reading Readiness Starts Early

Learning the Sounds of Letters and Language

You might be surprised to realize how early in infancy reading readiness begins. The minute your baby turns toward your voice, or cries when he hears the voice of a stranger he shows that he has begun to distinguish one sound from another. These listening, or auditory, skills keep getting more and more finely tuned as your baby listens to nursery rhymes and lullabies, and your day-to-day conversations with him. Comment on his tiny toes while changing his diaper, talk about his red shirt when getting dressed, all this brings the sounds of language into your child's life.

By the time he is a toddler, your child can join in when you sing a song or recite a familiar rhyme. Encourage him to take an active part. You say: "One, two, buckle my . . . " and then pause, hoping that he will supply the missing rhyming word, shoe.

Learning the Alphabet song is another step in reading readiness. As your child learns that the letters of the alphabet need to go in a special order, he is learning not only the letters of the alphabet, but also about auditory sequencing; sounds must go in a particular order.

All these games you play for fun help develop reading readiness. They sharpen your child's auditory skills, and pave the way for him to learn phonetics -- the sounds of the alphabet letters.

Learning the Look of Letters

From a very early age your baby responds with a smile when she sees someone she knows and likes. She might begin to cry when confronted by a stranger. This happens because she is beginning to distinguish familiar from unfamiliar.

As a toddler, she starts to develop concepts like the idea of a dog. At the beginning she'll probably look at all four-legged creatures and say "doggie." But as she reaches age three or four, she will start to see the subtle differences, calling a cat "kitty," and horse "horsey." She will have learned to tell these animals apart, visually discriminating their different characteristics, and tag each one with a different word.

Parents can encourage this process. Playing shape games with decks of picture cards helps her further develop these skills. She learns the difference between a rectangle and a square, even if she can't identify them by name.

She knows that although a zebra and a

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Tools of the Trade

If you want to invest in a few basic tools for your child, here are some good ones to consider.

- *A good quality chalkboard or a wipe-clean writing message board hung within easy reach of the child. Whichever one you choose, get a large enough size so that your preschooler's developing fine muscles aren't cramped when trying to write.*

- *Fat sidewalk type chalk (easiest for little fingers to grasp and doesn't break as readily) for the chalkboard or water soluble, thick magic markers (glide easily, offering little resistance, and therefore do half the work) for the message board.*

- *Some extra large size pads of drawing paper and fat crayons.*

- *Good children's books that appeal to your child. (It isn't necessary to purchase these books. A monthly outing to your local library should be a celebrated event that offers your child a continual supply of new books.)*

- *Decks of picture cards and lotto games. These items are excellent for developing skills in finding (visual discrimination), matching, and naming, all important skills for the beginning reader. Select cards and games with pictures of familiar objects in categories of interest to your child. Wild or farm animals, foods, items of clothing and play things are a few topics that might interest your preschooler.*

- *Alphabet blocks, magnetic letters and magnet board.*

Lois W. Stern, M.S.

leopard have similar shapes, the zebra is the one with stripes while the leopard has spots.

She may have begun to recognize alphabet letters, especially the ones that make up her name. You can encourage this interest by teaching her the look, form, and name of some of these alphabet letters.

Eventually, she will be able to distinguish **b** from a **d**, and **n** from **u**. Then, she'll realize that it takes a cluster of letters put together in a special order to form words such as **b-e-d** for **bed** and **n-u-t** for **nut**. But even if she is not yet interested in letters, all the fun things you are doing together sharpen her ability to see the important differences between letters, and these visual discrimination skills pave the way for whole word instruction: recognizing words by sight.

Learning to Read

There are literally hundreds of different reading programs on the market. Many are based on a combination of two methods of instruction: Phonetics and Sight Reading.

Phonetics uses children's ability to associate sounds with individual letters and blend those individual sounds to make a word. When children make the sounds for the letters **c**, **a**, **t** to read the word **cat**, or write the word **love** as **luv** they are using phonetics.

Sight Reading, sometimes called the Whole Word approach, relies on a child's ability to recognize the whole word at once. Children rely on word size (the number of letters), shape (**bed** looks different than **end**) and perhaps its first letter as quick clues to the word's "name."

The great debate from the 1940s forward has focused upon the simple question: "Which form of instruction is most effective?" To answer this question I would have to respond: "Neither, yet both," for the answer lies within the individual child.

In most cases children become stronger readers more quickly if they have been offered instruction combining both approaches, giving them both skills to use. Some children have a strong learning style, a strength or preference for learning by one method rather than the other.

Your child will give you lots of clues about his likes and dislikes, activities he seems to enjoy and those that present frustrations. You can help him best by playing games that seem fun for him, creating a joyous learning atmosphere.

Lois W. Stern, M.S. is a veteran Reading Specialist with Masters degrees in both Elementary Education, and Reading. She is the former President of Suffolk Reading Council and a member of the Board of Directors of the NYS Reading Association. As the founder and president of Kidstories.com she authors personalized children's books and poems. Lois is also co-editor of LI Eye, a new Long Island internet webzine and enjoys hearing from readers. You can e-mail her at: lois@kidstories.com

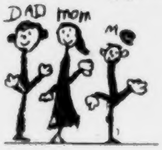
Something Special

Check your local public television listings for a lovely new program called *Between the Lions.* This program makes learning to read a positive and enjoyable experience. The show features colorful characters, songs, stories, skits, puppets, animation, and live action. Parents and kids will find *Between the Lions* hilarious as well as informative. After *Sesame Street* - it's *Between the Lions* for the next step toward word mastery.

Helping Kids Develop Pre-Reading Skills

There are many fun things that you can do to start your child on the road to reading.

Visual pre-reading skills - a sight word approach



Family Member Names: Gather a few photos of individual family members. Write each member's name on a separate index card. Play matching games, matching the printed name to the photo. When your child is able to match names to photos you can move on to Family Member Sentences.

Family Member Sentences: What would you like Daddy to do? If the child answers: "ride a bike," write a short sentence with each of these words on a different index card. Line the cards up in the order that says: "Daddy can ride a bike." Then, switch the name. "Let's make 'Grandpa can ride a bike.'" Encourage your child to add new words. "What else can Daddy do? What words would you like to add to this sentence?"

Put a new word on each card and let your child arrange the words into silly sentences. "bike ride down hill Grandpa the can." Play Unscramble and show your child how you rearrange the cards to make a real sentence.

Bean Bag Toss: Active preschoolers might not want to sit still long enough to rearrange index cards on the table. But they might just love tossing beanbags into buckets labeled with different words. Start with the photos and name cards of family members and tape each index card and photo to a different bucket, or similar container. Ask her to toss the beanbag into the "Daddy" bucket. If it hits a different bucket, say "Oops, that wasn't Daddy. Do you know whose name you hit that time?"

Reminder: *Teach your child the letters in her name so she becomes accustomed to seeing these letters and their shapes and knows that it takes a cluster of letters to make a word. Use the capital or upper case form for the letter that begins her name, but lower case forms for the letters that follow.*

Auditory pre-reading skills - a phonetic approach stressing letter sounds

Silly Sentences: Make up silly sentences. See if you can listen for the word that makes this sentence silly:
"Rover was so hungry that he barked up all his dinner."
- What word makes it silly?(barked)
- What word should we change it to?(ate)

"I sleep in my wastebasket every night."
- What word makes it silly? (wastebasket)
- What word should we change it to? (bed)

Rhyming Fun: Make up rhymes with your child, leaving off the last rhyming word: I'm cold, but not so bold. In many years I'll grow quite . . . (old)

What Do You Like Better? Children love listening to your sentences and playing the *What do you like better* game. Talk about things that your child knows and has experienced.
- What do you like better: Going to the science museum or the zoo?
- What do you like better: ice cream or lollipops?

What Am I: Give your child clues to figure out the common objects in her life.
- Clue: It's red and juicy and crunches when I take a bite. What am I? (apple)
- Clue: It's something in the kitchen that keeps our milk and butter cold. What am I? (refrigerator)

You can change this game to make it appeal more to active little ones. While playing the *What am I* game, describe objects that can be readily seen and ask the child to hop to it with one hand on her head, or jump to it with both hands behind her back. Make some of the actions really silly. "We open it to get outside. Run to it and wiggle your nose up against it."

Copycat: This is a physical game for active youngsters to help them listen to differences in sounds. Depending on the age of your child, provide a series of sounds and actions and ask him to repeat them. "I'm going to clap and stamp in different ways. Listen carefully and see if you can be my copycat and do it just the same way."

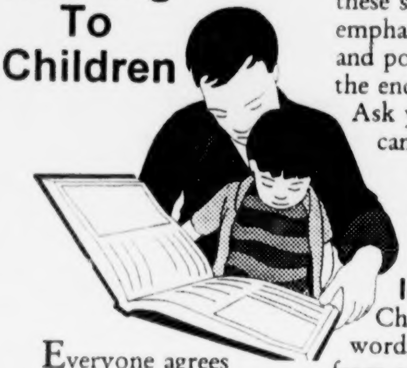
Start with two or three simple action patterns such as: clap-clap-stamp, and gradually increase the number of actions while varying the patterns.

Next let your youngster provide the series and see if you can be the copycat.

Reminder: *Teach your child the Alphabet Song so she becomes accustomed to hearing the names of the letters.*

Lois W. Stern, M.S.

Reading To Children



Everyone agrees that reading to children is very important. What is not often discussed is that what parents read and the way they read makes a difference.

Sounds Made by Words and Letters

Children's books are rich with rhymes (in which the words end with the same sounds) and alliterations (in which the words begin with the same sounds). Help your children become aware of these sounds by emphasizing them and pointing them out at the end of the story. Ask your child if she can think of other examples.

Enhanced Vocabulary and Information

Children learn new words and concepts from context. When you read to your child help him deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words. Parents can enhance children's learning by relating them to the children's own experiences. If a book talks about a blizzard you can reinforce that a blizzard is a very heavy driving snow, and then ask your child "Do you remember when there was so much snow we couldn't see out the front door of the house?"

In *Sheep Take a Hike* by Nancy Shaw (see Library Resources), the sheep get lost, but find their way home by following the wool that was caught in the brambles. What a perfect opportunity to teach children that wool comes from the coats of sheep.

The more you help your child become engaged with the words and ideas in the story, the more she will learn. So read often, and even the same stories, if your youngster asks.

Cognitive Skills

Help your youngster understand the flow of stories. Read a book and ask your child what he thinks will happen next. Ask him to tell you the story just from looking at the pictures. Come up with a different ending. Ask him to tell you what he liked the most about the story. Or what other things the characters could do. What else could the sheep have done if they were lost? What could they have done to make sure they didn't get lost?

Be Enthusiastic

Read with emotional expression, the way you would if you were acting out the story. When a character says "I'm lost," say it in a sad little voice. The wind doesn't just blow through the trees, it **bloooooows** through the trees.

It's Not Just Books

When you talk to your youngster you can also use these techniques. Ask your child questions about what she did today, what happened at the preschool, at her friend's house. Comment on what you see in the supermarket. Remind your youngster that peas aren't manufactured, they actually grow in pods and not in cans.

Notice the intricately carved buildings when you take a ride on the bus. Stone masons created them. Vendors sell chestnuts and hot pretzels. How do you think they keep them warm? What do they do with the cart at night? Ask your youngster to imagine where some of the things could be stored. In the garage? How do you think they move it? Tow it by car or truck?

Make an effort to talk, read, and interact with your youngsters. Share your thoughts, ideas, values and you will be expanding their horizons.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.

Dear Reader

One of the most potent predictors of success in school and of scores on intelligence tests is reading ability. And, particularly vocabulary. The number of words your child knows turns out to be related to all kinds of good outcomes in school. When you think about it, the relationship makes a lot of sense. The more words your child knows, the more concepts she has to use in thinking, and in learning other ideas.

This month *P&pN* and Lois Stern, MS focus on reading, that most crucial skill learned in childhood. Not only does Lois describes how children learn to read, she provides some fun (and educational) parent-child activities and reminds us that development of this skill begins at birth.

We always hear about the importance of reading to children. It's one of the best ways to encourage a child's love of reading. But reading does far more. Check out *Reading to Children*, and the Library Resources.

Will reading to your youngster guarantee your child will become an avid reader? No, it won't. Some children simply enjoy reading. They'll drag around books and insist you read to them, read with them, or listen to them as they attempt to read themselves. Other children are not born readers. Words don't come alive for them. But you can still give that child a rich language experience through your verbal interactions.

Finally, in our Health Corner Fran Brenner tells us about allergies -- what they are, what they do, and how we can tell if our children's problems are allergies, asthma, or a cold.

Finally, check our "Books of Giving Thanks" and enjoy your Thanksgiving!

Neala Schwartzberg

THE HEALTH CORNER

Childhood Allergies

My nose is runny. My eyes itch. I got a tickle in my throat. My skin has itchy bumps all over.

Often these are the complaints parents hear from their children with allergies. Some sound like cold symptoms. In fact, close to 13 million children seek medical care for allergy symptoms often confused with a common cold.

❖ WHAT IS AN ALLERGY?

An allergy is an unusual reaction or hypersensitivity to something that comes in contact with body surfaces. There is a hereditary component to these allergies. If one parent has allergies, there is a 25 percent chance that a child will develop allergies; when both parents suffer, the likelihood more than doubles.

Ordinarily, these substances, called allergens, are not bothersome. But for people with allergies, any time these allergens come in contact with their eyes, nose, lungs, stomach and skin, they can have a reaction. Allergens can be inhaled (pollens, dust, mold and animal dander), swallowed (foods, medications), injected (medications, insect stings) or come in contact with skin (poison ivy, jewelry, latex).

When the body encounters an allergen it responds by creating an immune response. It tries to protect itself from the invaders. Unfortunately, this reaction causes the problem. The allergens enter the body, stimulate the immune response and then trigger the production of powerful substances called histamines. Histamines cause tissues to become inflamed and swollen as well as cause excess mucus secretion. This results in stuffy noses, watery itchy eyes, skin rashes and narrowed airways with breathing difficulties. Many of the over-the-counter remedies for allergies are anti-histamines that counteract these effects.

❖ COMMON ALLERGENS

Weeds, grasses, pollen (plant/tree) are very common outdoor allergens. But indoors other things that can trigger a reaction. Many people are allergic to mold, and dust (and dust mites, the little creatures that actually live in dust motes). Other people have strong reactions to cleaning products, or perhaps anything with latex. Food allergies are also common, especially to nuts, strawberries, shell fish, and eggs. Pets? Yes. Anything with fur or feathers. It's the animal dander and saliva that provoke the problems.

❖ ALLERGIES, ASTHMA, AND THE COMMON COLD

Parents should suspect allergies when their children have unexplained bouts of diarrhea, vomiting or stomach cramps, skin rashes or itchy skin that "weeps" clear fluid and forms crusts.

Allergy symptoms can also include a runny or stuffed nose, sneezing, wheezing, watery and itchy eyes. These are also the indications of the common cold, but colds are also signaled by the more classic complaints of fever, and aches and pains. With allergies, the symptoms occur almost immediately after exposure to the allergen(s) but with colds the symptoms usually take a few days to hit full force.

Asthma is a chronic medical condition of the upper respiratory airways [bronchi] and lungs. Although asthma attacks can be caused by allergies, they can also occur from vigorous exercise, exposure to cold air, irritating fumes and air pollutants, cigarette smoke and viral infections.

❖ DIAGNOSIS

Allergies sometimes are diagnosed by taking a family history, and a careful review of symptoms. There may be a brief trial of allergy medications. If symptoms are not relieved and begin to interfere with the child's life your doctor may recommend allergy testing, starting with the "scratch tests." These are fast and easy to do and a good indicator of allergies.

In these tests, small amounts of different allergens are introduced to the surface of skin. Allergic reaction is observed, timed and measured.

❖ TREATMENT OF ALLERGIES

It is important to treat allergies in children. The congestion and inflammation from allergies block the normal "plumbing/drainage system" of the ears and nasal cavities, leading to sinusitis and chronic ear infections. Chronic mouth breathing resulting from your child's stuffy nose, can lead to orthodontic problems. Treating allergies early in your child's life may decrease the likelihood of asthma occurrence.

The focus of allergy treatment involves:

Avoiding exposure to allergens may involve changes in diet or in the environment. If allergies run in the family your pediatrician may delay or introduce foods slowly to prevent an allergic reaction.

Doctors may use medication such as antihistamines or decongestants to prevent and/or relieve allergy symptoms.

If allergies are a persistent problem, the

» » *Continued on Page 6.*

doctor may suggest immunotherapy (commonly known as allergy shots) to reduce sensitivity. This involves exposure to small amounts of the allergen injected into the arm in increasingly higher concentrations, allowing the body to build tolerance to allergens. Treatments are spread out over several weeks until a maintenance level is reached.

❖ ANAPHYLAXIS

Although most people's symptoms are annoying, and for some may provoke an asthma attack, for a small percentage of the population the allergic reaction may be fatal. This form of allergy represents the most intense and extreme form of allergic reaction. Within moments of exposure to a particular allergen the body responds by releasing massive amounts of chemicals that cause vomiting, cramps, swelling of body tissues, especially in the airway, and a sudden drop in blood pressure. This type of reaction must be treated immediately with adrenaline. Anaphylaxis generally occurs in people who are exquisitely sensitive to items such as penicillin, stinging insects, shellfish or nuts.

Fran Brenner is in practice as a Nurse Practitioner/Nurse Educator at Roosevelt Hospital. She is the Parent-Child Developmental Specialist at Metropolitan Hospital Center. She is taking postgraduate advanced training courses in the Institute for Clinical Studies of Infants, Toddlers & Parents.

PARENT RESOURCES

American Academy of Pediatrics
141 Northwest Point Boulevard
Elk Grove, Village, IL 60007
www.aap.org

The Food Allergy Network (FAN)
[child-focused information and support]
(800) 929-4040
www.foodallergy.org

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health
31 Center Drive, Room 7A50
MSC 2520
Bethesda, MD 20892-2520
(301) 496-5717 www.niaid.nih.gov

- *FDA Consumer Special Report*: Focus on Food Labeling (includes article on ingredient labeling) write to FDA, HFE-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857
- *Guide to Your Child's Allergies and Asthma*. American Academy of Pediatrics. Michael J. Welch, M.D., FAAP. (Editor-In-Chief) 2000. This is the latest in a series of parenting books published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. It is an excellent resource and reference guide for parents. It is both readable and parent-friendly, and offers current, important information about symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of childhood allergies and asthma.
- *Family Guide to Asthma and Allergies: How you and your children can breathe easier*, American Lung Association Asthma Advisory Group with Norman H. Edelman, MD; Little Brown and Company, New York, 1997. An easy-to-read yet comprehensive and informative book on asthma, from the experts at the American Lung Association. It describes asthma, the triggers and promoters of asthma and allergies, treating asthma in adults and children, benefits of exercise, what to tell the school, and more.

Books of Giving Thanks

Thanksgiving would seem to be the right time of year to think about all the good things in our lives and be grateful. There are many ways to be thankful, many things that people do and say. Some share their bounty with others, some look out at the world and offer thanks. These books provide ways for us to think about the deeper meaning of life.

🕮 ***Grandad's Prayers of the Earth*** by Douglas Wood; illustrated by P.J. Lynch; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1999; Hardcover, $16.99. "Holding hands around the table with family and friends, remembering all that holds us together and giving thanks is one of the greatest prayers." The earth, and everything on it is a form of prayer, according to Grandad. And the purpose? We pray "not to change the world, but to change ourselves." And when Grandad dies, the boy finds a sense of peace in the prayers of the earth.

🕮 ***In Every Tiny Grain of Sand: A child's book of prayers and praise*** collected by Reeve Lindbergh; illustrated by Christine Davenier, Bob Graham, Anita Jeram, and Elisa Kleven; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000; Hardcover, $21.99. You could call them prayers, or perhaps even meditations. Certainly some sound traditional, but many come from cultures where prayer isn't a formal time but an ongoing awareness of life around us. Some of the pieces included are poems – some seem more like observations. But all encourage us to see the world from a new and more observant and caring perspective – "Feeding the birds is also a form of prayer... (Pope Pius XII).

🕮 ***One Earth, One Spirit*** Compiled by Tessa Strickland; Sierra Club Books for Children; San Francisco; Hardcover, $14.95). A collection from many faiths and cultures from Christianity to Zen Buddhist, all to celebrate the earth and its people.

Research News

Once in a while we come across research that has something important to say to parents of young children. Here are the results of one interesting new study.

Misbehaving children's concern for others can decrease as they enter the elementary school years. Parents who are warm and supportive may help promote their children's concern.

In the early years of life, even aggressive and disruptive children can show concern for the welfare of others. However, this concern can decrease as the children reach school age.

The study looked at children who, as preschoolers, showed low, moderate, or high levels of aggressive and disruptive behavior. When these children were four and-a-half, and six and-a-half years old researchers observed while their mothers and a female experimenter pretended to injure their foot while dropping objects on the floor, wincing or grimacing, expressing pain, and rubbing the injured area. In addition, at six and-a-half years, mothers, teachers and the children answered questions about the children's concern for others.

What Did They Find?

At preschool age, aggressive and disruptive children showed just as much concern over the adults' distress as did children with fewer behavior problems. However, this concern for others shown by the children with the highest levels of problem behaviors underwent a worrisome change over the following two years. It actually decreased from preschool to elementary school. The most aggressive and disruptive children were also described by mothers, teachers and themselves, as being the least prosocial.

Not all children who were initially aggressive and disruptive showed this drop in concern, nor did all these children continue to show aggressive behavior. Those children with initially higher levels of concern actually showed improved behavior.

The authors suggest that these children may have become less antisocial because they were distressed by the harm that their actions caused others. According to the researchers, concern for others may make it possible for these children to take responsibility for their actions.

A Role for Parents

"Our results also show important links between parenting style and children's prosocial development," said the authors. "The present results clearly suggest that mothers who are overtly strict and harshly punitive, who do not tend to reason or establish reasonable and consistent rules, and who strongly show their anger or disappointment with their children, are likely to impede their children's prosocial development."

Conversely, children showed greater concern for others when mothers were warm, used reasoning, set appropriate guidelines, and avoided the use of harsh punishments. What accounts for this? "Angry, authoritarian parenting could be interpreted by the children as a lack of care or concern on the part of the parents," said the authors.

➢ Article: "The Development of Concern for Others in Children With Behavior Problems," Paul D. Hastings, PhD, and Carolyn Zahn-Waxler, PhD, National Institute of Mental Health, JoAnn Robinson, PhD, University of Colorado at Boulder, Barbara Usher, PhD, National Institute of Mental Health and Dana Bridges, University of Colorado at Boulder; *Developmental Psychology*, 2000, Vol. 36, No.5

What Does the Research Mean?

Children's level of empathy and concern for others is affected by parenting. If parents demonstrate warmth, avoid harsh physical punishment in favor of establishing boundaries and explaining the reason for the rules, then even initially aggressive and disruptive children can change their behavior. When they can feel the emotions of another youngster, and see the harm their behavior creates, they can learn to curb their actions.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, PhD

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moving?

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Library Resources

Reading Books

The Joy of Language

🕮 ***Alphabet City*** by Stephen T. Johnson; Puffin Books; New York, 1999; Softcover $5.99. Can you find the letters that are part of the objects in the photographs? Fire-escape stairs are in the shape of a B, girders on the bridge form an N. After you go through the book with your child, look around your environment and see what other letters you can find.

🕮 ***Banana Moon*** by Janet Marshall; Greenwillow Books; New York; 1998; Hardcover $12.95. This book has vivid illustrations that change as the child turns the page. Sail to the land of cinnamon sand where candy canes become candy cane sails as the story unfolds beneath a bright banana moon.

🕮 ***Days Like This*** by Simon James; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover $17.99. A collection of 19 sweet small poems celebrating guitars ("On my little guitar with only one string I play in the moonlight any old thing."), sleeping outdoors (Under the dark is a star, under the star is a tree, under the tree is a blanket, and under the blanket is me.") and more.

🕮 ***How Hilda Hushed Her Hiccups*** by Mair Tini Luchetti and Mariellen Tini Sluko; illustrated by Erin Marie Mauterer; Atori Publishing, Inc., Olyphant, PA; Hardcover with CD $18.95. Hilda the hyena has the hiccups. The only cure is to go to Hiccup Land. This rhyming story was created by two educators and contains tips on how to use the book to help children develop reading skills. It has a CD of the story and songs.

🕮 ***I Read Symbols*** by Tana Hoban; Mulberry Books; New York, 1999; Softcover $4.95. Hoban's books have no text, but the photos of common every-day symbols convey meaning.

🕮 ***Inside a Zoo in the City*** by Alyssa Satin Capucilli; illustrated by Tedd Arnold; Scholastic; New York, 2000; Hardcover $11.95. All the zoo animals are home sleeping. Suddenly, Parrot's alarm goes off. Parrot wakes Tiger, who wakes Lion, and so on until all the animals are awake and back at the zoo in time for the opening. The story is also a rebus in which the names of the animals are replaced with drawings. Encourage your child to name the animals as you read the story.

🕮 ***The Letters are Lost*** by Lisa Campbell; Puffin Books; New York, 1999; Softcover $5.99. An alphabet book which starts with all the letters together in their box. But gradually, the letters get lost. The H ends up under a Hat. P into a bowl of Popcorn.

🕮 ***Mrs. McNosh Hangs Up Her Wash*** by Sarah Weeks; pictures by Nadine Bernard Westcott; HarperFestival; New York, 1998; Hardcover $9.95. Told in rhyming verse, Mrs. McNosh hangs up not only her wash, but everything else in sight. At the end, she is sitting in a comfortable chair, on the clothes line.

🕮 ***Paddington Bear Goes to Market*** by Michael Bond; pictures by R. W. Alley, HarperFestival; 1998; Boardbook $5.95. Bright illustrations and simple rhyming text about the beloved bear makes this a perfect book for young children learning the sounds of language.

🕮 ***Paddington Bear and the Busy Bee Carnival*** by Michael Bond; pictures by R. W. Alley; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover $12.95. Paddington Bear's outing to the Carnival turns into a hunt to find all the things that begin with the letter B.

🕮 ***Peek-a-boo, Lizzy Lou!*** by Lauren Attinello; puppet designed by Rollie Krewson; Workman Publishing; New York, 1997; Boardbook & puppet $16.95. Lizzy Lou plays peek-a-boo, all in rhyme. "Bump! Bang! Beep! Beep! What's that noise? It's Tiger hiding in the toys!" The adorable Muppet Puppet allows parent and child to continue the peek-a-boo fun.

🕮 ***Picture This...*** Alison Jay, Dutton Children's Books; New York, 2000; Hardcover $15.99. A simple book with primitive-style illustrations of words like hill, airplane, car; the pictures are linked by images which flow from one page into the next.

🕮 ***Sheep Take a Hike*** by Nancy Shaw; illustrated by Margot Apple; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1994; Softcover $4.95. The sheep are at it again. This time they've taken a hike and gotten lost, all in rhyme. Luckily their wool has gotten caught on the thorns, providing them with trail to follow back home.

🕮 ***Word Wizard*** by Cathryn Falwell; Clarion Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover $15.00. Anagrams are words made up of the same letters in a different order. In this delightful book Anna changes objects from one to another by changing the order of the letters (and sometimes adding or dropping one), to help Zack find his way home.

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El ABC de los Niños y la Lectura

Es temprano en la mañana en el jardín infantil del barrio. Juan, el niño pequeño en la camisa roja a cuadros, esta dando golpes de kárate en el centro de sala. También es el primero en ponerse en la fila para salir a recreo. Quiere asegurarse de ser el primero de apoderarse de uno de los dos triciclos que esperan en la parte pavimentada del patio de recreo.

Ahora, mire a Jessica, la niña que usa las cintas moradas en su pelo crespo y negro. A medida que camina en el aula, se detiene súbitamente a leer las letras P-A-R-E en un letrero pegado en el tablero de anuncios. "Esa palabra dice PARE", declara orgullosamente. Jessica está evidentemente demostrando una cierta aptitud para aprender a leer. Pero qué pasa con Juan? Él también empezará el kindergarten el próximo año.

La Aptitud Para Leer Empieza Temprano

Aprendiendo los Sonidos de las Letras y Lenguaje

Ud. puede sorprenderse en cuan temprano en la infancia comienza la aptitud para leer. El minuto que su bebé da vuelta la cabeza hacia su voz, o llora cuando escucha la voz de un extraño está demostrando que ha empezado a distinguir un sonido de otro. Estas habilidades auditivas y para escuchar se afinan mas y más a medida que su bebé escucha canciones de cuna, arrullos y su conversación cotidiana. Haga comentarios sobre sus deditos gordos mientras le cambia los pañales, háblele sobre su camisa roja cuando lo viste. Todas estas cosas les traen los sonidos del lenguaje a la vida de su niño.

Cuando llega ser un niño que empieza a andar, su hijo puede acompañarlo cuando Ud. canta una canción o recita una rima conocida. Alíentelo a que tome un papel activo. Ud. dice: "Caracol, caracol, saca tus cachitos al ....." y después haga una pausa, con la esperanza que él pondrá la palabra que falta en la rima, sol.

Aprender la canción del Alfabeto es otro paso en el camino a leer. A medida que su niño aprende que las letras del alfabeto tienen que ir en cierto orden, no solo está aprendiendo las letras del alfabeto, sino que también sobre secuencias auditivas: es decir, que los sonidos deben estar en un orden específico.

Todos estos juegos que se juegan para entretenerse ayudan a desarrollar la aptitud para leer. Agudizan las habilidades auditivas y lo ayudan a aprender fonética -los sonidos de las letras del alfabeto.

Aprendiendo el Aspecto de las Letras

Desde muy temprana edad su bebé responde con una sonrisa cuando ve a alguien que conoce y quiere. Quizás llore cuando se enfrenta a un extraño. Esto pasa

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porque está empezando a distinguir entre lo conocido y desconocido.

Cuando la niña pequeña está en edad de empezar a andar, ella empieza a desarrollar conceptos como la idea de un perro. Al principio seguramente mirará a todas las criaturas de cuatro patas y dirá "perrito". Pero cuando llega a la edad de tres o cuatro años, ella empezará a ver sutiles diferencias, y llamará al gato "gatito", y al caballo, "caballito". Ella habrá aprendido a diferenciar a estos animales, discriminando visualmente sus distintas características y apodando a cada uno con una palabra distinta

Los padres pueden alentar este proceso. Jugar juegos de formas con naipes de imágenes pueden ayudarla a desarrollar estas habilidades. Ella aprende la diferencia entre un rectángulo y un cuadrado, aun cuando no los pueda identificar por su nombre.

Ella sabe que a pesar que una zebra y un leopardo tienen formas similares, la zebra es la que tiene rayas mientras que el leopardo tiene manchas.

Ella quizás ha empezado a reconocer las letras del alfabeto, especialmente las que componen su nombre. Ud. puede alentar este interés enseñandole las formas, características y nombre de esas letras.

Eventualmente, ella podrá distinguir entre una b y una d, y una n de una u. Entonces se dará cuenta que se necesita un grupo de letras juntas en un orden especial para formar las palabras como b-o-l-a para bola, y d-e-d-o para dedo. Pero incluso si todavía no está interesada en letras, todas las cosas entretenidas que Uds. están haciendo juntos agudizan su capacidad de poder ver importantes diferencias entre letras, y estas habilidades de discriminación visual abren el camino para la instrucción de palabras completas: reconociendo palabras con la vista.

Aprendiendo a Leer

Existen literalmente cientos de distintos programas para leer en el mercado. Muchos están basados en la combinación de dos distintos métodos de instrucción: La Fonética y la Lectura Visual.

La fonética usa la habilidad de los niños de relacionar sonidos con letras específicas y mezclar los sonidos individuales para formar una palabra. Cuando los niños hacen los sonidos de las letras g, a, t, o para poder leer la palabra gato, o escriben guagua como wawa, están usando la fonética.

La Lectura Visual, a veces llamada enfoque de la Palabra Integral, confía en la capacidad del niño de leer la palabra completa de una sola vez. Los niños confían en el tamaño de la palabra (el número de letras), forma (cama se ve distinto a llama) y quizás la primera letra como indicios del "nombre" de la palabra.

La gran polémica desde los años 40 en adelante se ha centrado en la simple pregunta: "Qué forma de instrucción es la más eficaz?" Para contestar esta interrogante tendría que responder: "Ninguna de las dos, sin embargo ambas", porque la respuesta depende de cada niño en específico.

En la mayoría de los casos los niños se convierten en lectores más hábiles más rápidamente si se les ha enseñado en una combinación de ambos enfoques, dándoles ambas habilidades para su uso. Algunos niños tienen un estilo de aprendizaje fuerte, una preferencia de aprender con un método sobre otro.

Su niño le dará muchas pistas sobre sus preferencias o sobre lo que no le gusta, las actividades que le gustan y las que le producen frustración. Ud. lo puede ayudar jugando los juegos que les parecen entretenidos, creando una atmósfera alegre de aprendizaje.

Ayudar a los Niños a Desarrollar Habilidades Pre-Lectura

Hay muchas cosas entretenidas que se pueden hacer para iniciar a su niño en el camino a la lectura.

Pre-lectura visual – el enfoque visión palabra

Los Nombres de Miembros de la Familia:

Reúna unas pocas fotografías de miembros individuales de la familia. Escriba el nombre de cada persona en una tarjeta aparte. Juegue juegos de comparación, comparando el nombre escrito al de la foto. Cuando su hijo pueda equiparar los nombres a las fotografías se puede pasar a Oraciones de Miembros de la Familia.

Oraciones de Miembros de la Familia:

Qué te gustaría que hiciera papá? Si el niño contesta: andar en bicicleta, escriba una oración corta con cada una de estas palabras en una tarjeta distinta. Ordene las tarjetas en un orden que diga: "El papá puede andar en bicicleta". Después, cambie el nombre. "Hagamos 'el abuelito anda en bicicleta'." Aliente a su niño a agregar nuevas palabras. "Qué otra cosa puede hacer papá? Qué palabras te gustaría agregarle a la oración?"

Ponga una palabra nueva en cada tarjeta y deje que su hijo arregle las palabras en oraciones necias. "Bicicleta colina baja abuelito puede". Juegue a Descifrar y demuéstrele a su niño cómo arreglar las tarjetas para hacer una oración de verdad.

Tiro de Bolsa:

Quizás niños pre-escolares que son activos no quieran estar sentados suficiente rato para estar arreglando tarjetas en una mesa. Pero quizás les encante tirar una bolsa llena de frijoles en tarros rotulados con distintas palabras. Empiece con las fotografías y las tarjetas de distintos miembros de la familia y pegue cada tarjeta y fotografía a un tarro distinto o recipiente parecido. Pídale que tire la bolsa al tarro "papá". Si cae en un tarro distinto, diga "Oh, ese no era papá. Sabes a qué nombre le diste?"

Recordatorio: Enséñele a su hijo las letras de su nombre para que se acostumbre a ver estas letras y sus formas, y se dé cuenta que se necesita un grupo de letras para hacer una palabra. Use mayúsculas para la letra que inicia su nombre y minúsculas para las letras que siguen.

Habilidades auditivas de pre-lectura – un enfoque fonético que recalca los sonidos de las letras

Oraciones necias:

Invente oraciones necias. Vea si encuentra la palabra que hace que esta oración sea necia: Fido tenía tanto hambre que ladró toda su comida.

Qué palabra la hace necia? (ladró)

A qué palabra debiéramos cambiarla? (comió)

Yo duermo en un basurero todas las noches.

Qué palabra la hace necia? (basurero)

A qué palabra debiéramos cambiarla? (cama)

Diversión con Rimas: Invente rimas con su hija dejando fuera la ultima palabra de la rima.

Tengo frío pero no tantos tíos.

En el futuro todo será... (mío)

Qué te gusta más?

A los niños les encanta escuchar sus oraciones y jugar el juego *Qué te gusta más*. Converse sobre cosas que su niño sabe y que ha vivido.

Qué te gusta más: Ir al museo de ciencias o al zoológico?
Qué te gusta más: los helados o los dulces?

Qué soy yo:

Dele a su niño pistas para descifrar los objetos comunes de su vida.

Pista: Es algo en la cocina que mantiene nuestra leche y mantequilla helada. Qué soy yo? (refrigerador)

Pista: Soy roja y jugosa y crujiente cuando la muerdo. Qué soy yo? (manzana)

Ud. puede cambiar este juego para que sea mas entretenido para los chicos más activos. Cuando juegue el juego *Qué soy yo*, describa objetos que se pueden ver fácilmente y pídale al niño que salte hacia él con una mano en la cabeza, o que salte hacia él con las dos manos detrás de su espalda. Haga algunas de las acciones verdaderamente tontas. "Las abrimos para llegar afuera. Corre hacia él y menea tu nariz sobre él.

Monito Mayor:

Este es un juego físico para niños activos para ayudarles a escuchar las diferencias en los sonidos. Dependiendo de la edad de su niño, de una serie de sonidos y acciones y pídale que los repita. "Voy a aplaudir y golpear de distintas maneras. Escucha cuidadosamente y ve si puedes ser mi monito mayor y hazlo de exactamente la misma manera".

Empiece con dos o tres patrones de acciones sencillas como: palmoteo-palmoteo-golpe, y paulatinamente aumente el número de acciones mientras varía el orden.

Después deje a su niño proveer la serie y vea si Ud. puede ser el monito que imita.

Recordatorio: Enséñele a su niño la Canción del Alfabeto para que se acostumbre a escuchar el nombre de las letras.

Lois W. Stern, M.S. es una especialista experimentada en Lectura con títulos de Maestría en Educación Básica y Lectura. Ella es ex Presidente del Consejo de Lectura de Suffolk y miembro del Consejo de Directores de la Asociación de Lectura de NYS. Como fundadora y presidente de Kidstories.com ella es autora de libros y poemas de niños personalizados. Lois también es co-editora de LI Eye, una nueva revista de Internet en Long Island y le gusta mucho recibir comentarios de sus lectores. Le puede enviar correo electrónico a: lois@kidstories.com

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

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Surprise! You're A Parent!

Suddenly you're a parent! It's funny how possible and impossible it feels both at the same time. It doesn't matter how much we have prepared ourselves, the reality of becoming a parent is very different from what we thought it would be.

We decided to talk to some of our friends and colleagues about their experiences as new parents, asking them what surprised them about being a parent.

Intense Feelings and Emotions

The very first thing we found out was that becoming a parent engenders very strong and unexpected feelings and emotions.

"I was in the delivery room, and my husband and the doctor were talking politics," remembers Martine. "Suddenly, the labor got more intense and very soon after that our daughter was born. Then it hit me. I felt that I had just been part of a miracle - that's the only way I can describe it. I was filled with awe at this new life. I started to cry and so did my husband. I had heard about the 'miracle of birth' but only at that moment did I realize what that phrase really meant."

Many new parents are surprised at how much they like being a parent. "When my daughter was born the most surprising thing for me was that I would absolutely love being a father. I had always thought 'well, I'll be a great dad' and 'I'm ready to love my child.' All of these thoughts seemed to focus on the child, as they should. What I didn't expect was that I would fall in love with being a father," says Zach. "I loved helping her walk and talk and play and read. I loved teaching her numbers and watching her explore her world. I just loved when she would look up at me with those big questioning eyes and say 'what that?' I was her hero and - wow - what a feeling it is to be someone's hero!"

Another surprising aspect these parents discovered is that they actually do put their children's needs above their own, without giving it a thought. Shira, a physician and first time mother, described something that happened right after her daughter's second birthday. Astrid was walking down the hallway of the apartment when suddenly she vomited. As Shira began to run down the hallway, she slipped and fell. After picking herself up she immediately grabbed Astrid, checked her, making sure she was all right, and then cleaned her and put her in her playpen. Only then did Shira realize her own condition. Her arm had a lump on it, her knee was slightly swollen and she was suddenly overwhelmed by the realization that she had "actually fallen into puke" and she never even realized it. "Now I knew what it meant when people said they could sacrifice themselves to protect their child. I always thought of that as

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a cliche. Now I knew differently, and I never would have guessed it!"

Feelings of Responsibility and Competence

Very often we surprise ourselves by just how good we really can be as parents, and how much hard work is involved.

"I couldn't believe Dalia and I could actually function and be good parents on so little sleep," reports Amir. "When we brought our son home from the hospital the work just never stopped. There were all of the feedings in the middle of the night, all of the diaper washing, all of the sterilizing of bottles and spoons and dishes. We never rested. And our son cried *a lot*. This was a difficult time but we came through everything and it made me feel competent and confident."

Sylvana also discovered how much responsibility is involved in raising a child. "You are pregnant and you know that, even in the womb, you are already responsible for your child, but it never strikes you how much work you will have to do to actually, physically raise your child. It takes your breath away when you realize just how much of an *obligation* it is to raise that child from infancy until he is able to be on his own. I knew that a baby would be a big job - it just never dawned on me that it would be my life's job."

Realities and Images That Don't Match

Sometimes having a baby causes less happy surprises. Often these come from the images people have of family life – ones that just don't reflect reality.

Sibling Stuff

No matter how much people think they are prepared for sibling issues, reality is always different. "We had it all worked out. We would have two children, spaced about three years apart. We would raise them to love and protect each other and the four of us would live happily ever after," remembers Michelle ruefully. "What a difference our fantasy was from reality. From the day we brought Lindsey home, Josh became a competitor." Michelle and her husband read all of the books and tried to follow all of the suggestions but Josh didn't cooperate. "He poked Lindsey, shouted above her voice when talking, constantly demanded our attention, and generally made things miserable. It was a total surprise for us that the sibling rivalry would be so strong" says Michelle.

I Never Thought This Would Happen

Another aspect of that violation of expectations happens when a child has a physical or cognitive disorder. We may have very serious, unexpected challenges to face - challenges we never even considered.

Mitchell, the child of Jennifer and Alex, was born with Down syndrome, a chromosomal disorder usually causing mental retardation. "Alex and I were, at first, devastated by this development," says

I Used to be Somewhat of a Star ...

I used to be somewhat of a star.
Once upon a time we entertained - we didn't have friends over for dinner, we *entertained*.
I prepared complex gastronomic delights that
Elicited contented *"oohs"* and *"ahhs"* as our guests dined,
While specially selected music gently played in the background
And scented candles glistened in the center of the table.
Then we had a baby and the only gastronomic delights that concerned us was whether to use commercial baby food or to make our own.
And if we made our own would we be able to get all of the lumps out of the mashed peas and if not, what would that mean in the grand scheme of things?
Are lumpy peas destiny?

I used to be somewhat of a star.
There was no controversial subject or current event that I was unprepared to comment on.
Conversational gambits were my forte - the thrust and parry of words and phrases fell trippingly from my tongue.
Then we had a baby and the only controversy of interest to me was
Should we use cloth or disposable diapers?
And if we used cloth, would I ever be able to keep up with the laundry?
And if we used disposable would I feel guilty and be a "bad" mommy?
And what would that mean in the grand scheme of things?
After all, are diapers destiny?

I used to be somewhat of a star.
I conquered mountains with the graceful "shuss-shuss" of the latest Swiss skis.
I zoomed around the town in my little sports car, sunglasses specially chosen because they looked "cool," the wind blowing through my carefully tinted auburn hair.
And then we had a baby and the only zooming I did was in and out of the supermarket in five minutes flat and
The only "shuss" you heard from me was when I told "Daddy" to turn down the game because his progeny was finally asleep in the next room and maybe, just maybe, I could get a chance to sit down and drink a cup of coffee in peace, you know?
And what is destiny anyway?

I used to be somewhat of a star
And then we had a baby
And she giggles when I kiss her nose
And holds her arms up for a hug when I pass by,
And blows a bubble just for me ...
And then I know
I still am ... .

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Jennifer. "We felt as though we would never be able to cope." This situation created great stresses within the family and it was some time before family members felt comfortable and accepting. Although Jennifer and Alex felt defeated and unprepared, they looked for and found special services for Mitchell.

Mitchell will always require additional attention and services, but his family can also see his special qualities. "Mitchell is the kindest, sweetest child in the world. We take care of him and love him dearly but we sure didn't expect to face these kinds of demands on our life together," says Jennifer.

Day to Day Life Changes

How Messy Can this House Get?

Another unexpected aspect of being a parent seems to be the amount of physical drudgery it takes to raise a child. No matter how many hours people spend per week in cleaning, washing, and cooking before they are parents, after the birth of a child the actual work increases dramatically. And as a second or third child is added to the family, the work of taking care of that family can increase to almost back-breaking amounts.

"We never realized how much physical work it would take to care for a child and home," says Maggie, a young accountant. She and her husband were used to keeping their apartment immaculately clean. But that abruptly changed after Gina was born. "The work never seemed to end. Just keeping her clean and fed seemed to take so much time and energy. After a full day's work, we both came home to another six or seven hours of cleaning, cooking, laundry, and still trying to get a little time in where we could just play with Gina. We never seemed to be able to rest."

Marriage Stresses

One of the most unexpected, and unwelcome, aspects about being a parent is the stress it places on a marriage. If two people decide to have a child to "heal" a marriage - they soon find that it can make things worse. A couple needs to be able to pull out all the understanding and kindness toward each other that they can muster if they want to make parenting really work.

"The one thing I wish people had told me before the birth of Sean was the impact it would have on my marriage. Every book I had read before the birth talked about the bonding and fulfillment of being a parent," says Lynda. "No one ever discussed how the stress, sleeplessness, anxiety, and hard work would change our marriage. It was truly difficult when all of the 'experts' were talking about unbridled joy and we were experiencing unbridled tension and screaming."

What Can Help?

So after talking to our friends and colleagues, what have we learned? We find that we are all in for some surprises when we become parents but there are also things we can do when life gets tough.

- **Get ready for parenting**. Prepare in advance with as much information as possible to help you feel reasonably confident that you'll be able to cope with being a parent. When you feel confident, and you have information to make decisions, you can change course if what you're doing isn't working.

- **Expect the unexpected**. Realize from the beginning that kids will change everything. Whatever you thought would happen probably won't, and what you didn't expect probably will happen. Being ready for the surprises will allow you to make quick adjustments.

- **Take care of your marriage**. Always try to set aside time for your mate. Make an actual daily appointment with each other to simply be together. It may be having a glass of lemonade while you cook dinner together or it may be just a walk around the neighborhood. Time together, taking care of each other, will be time well spent. It will draw you ever closer and help you parent as a team.

- **No one said you had to eat off of the floor**. What once was, will be no longer. Dishes won't get washed when you think they should. Laundry will sometimes end up being folded at midnight. Don't let household "schedules" interfere with the chance of spending time with your child or partner. Remember, the important things will get done and the things that don't get done may not be all that important.

- **When something serious happens, get the help you need.** Things such as unexpected illness are difficult to think about and still more difficult to accept. It may be an unexpected illness of your child or it might be a mother's persistent sense of sadness and depression. Just remember (1) there are other people out there who are coping with the same thing and (2) there are experts who can help you.

- **Compare notes with friends and peers.** Friends, family, even new parent groups can be very helpful, providing you with a sense that you're not in this alone. Not only can they provide information and support, you may find that your experiences aren't as unusual as you thought.

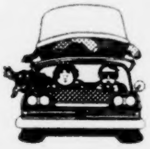
- **Look at life and parenting with a sense of humor.** Being a parent can be funny, and it can be frustrating, and sometimes both at the very same time. "When Charlie was two years old, he was everywhere he wasn't supposed to be," remembers Catherine. One day while doing chores, his parents heard a sudden, loud yelp from the kitchen. "We ran into the room and there was Charlie, completely covered in flour. It was everywhere. We nearly lost it. Then Charlie looked up at us, smiled a beatific smile and said 'I make snow.' Nick and I looked at this pile of white stuff and we burst out laughing. We wouldn't have traded that smile for all the clean houses in the world."

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour is a freelance writer and Public Information Officer for North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center.

Watch for Coming Months

- The Gift of Hope
- Sibling Issues
- Children's Fears
- As We Were Parented, So We Parent
- Kids and Social Studies

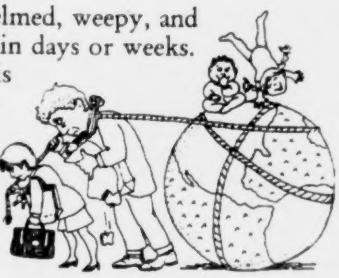
Moving?



We don't want you to miss even one issue. So, if you are moving be sure to notify your local Post Office of your new address and send it along with your old address label to: *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*; Attn: Subscription Dept.; NSC&FGC; 480 Old Westbury Rd.; Roslyn Hgts., NY 11577-2215

The Darker Side of Parenting Surprises

➢ *A Case of the Blues*



It's not unusual for new mothers to feel overwhelmed, weepy, and exhausted. For most women these feelings leave within days or weeks. Fluctuating hormones are the key contributors to this post-partum depression, and the fatigue and demands of parenting further add to the stress.

When these emotions persist over time, and are so crippling that they interfere with a mother's ability to care for her child and herself, it becomes a source of concern. Post-partum blues can be treated, and no mother should suffer with, or blame herself, for these feelings.

Speak to your partner, friends, and health care providers to ask for help in identifying and addressing these emotions. If you have had a depression with one child, let your physician know before you give birth to the next child. Preventive treatments are available.

➢ *Babies Who Cry Nonstop*

Some babies cry, and some babies *really* cry. If you have a baby who cries all day, or hours at a time with no relief, you may feel that it is your fault. But please check with your baby's doctor – your baby may be crying for a reason, and one that can be fixed.

There's also the fearsome colic, believed to be caused by stomach discomfort. It can make a baby cry for hours at a time and a tense, worried parent can sometimes offer little comfort. Happily babies (eventually) outgrow colic. Just finding out that your baby is thriving in spite of the all-day tears may reassure worried new parents that they really are doing a good job taking care of their child.

➢ *My Baby is Adopted*

Adoption comes with its own unique stressors and rewards. Whether it is a carefully planned open adoption, or a more turbulent overseas adoption, the end result may still leave a new parent feeling overwhelmed and unprepared.

Adoptions have become more common and burdened with fewer secrets than in the past. However, cross-cultural adoptions, adoption of older children, late in life adoptions, or even those often heralded but still rare instances of natural conception following an adoption all seem to create opportunities for people to ask parents stupid or embarrassing questions. Being a new parent is hard enough – uncomfortable comments from others are not helpful. Develop a few good lines for tactless neighbors or family, and then use them to protect yourself when necessary.

➢ *Going it Alone*

The rate of divorce has stayed fairly constant the past few years, near 50%. What has changed is that marriages are ending sooner, leaving single parents alone to raise babies. In addition, the rate of never married single-parenthood is also constant, with some indication that although teen pregnancy rates may be down a bit, older women are making up the difference.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of being a single parent is how hard it really is. It is therefore extremely important to create a network of support – through friends, community, work, family, child-care arrangements, and religious groups. While fatigue may keep you in your home, fight becoming a lonely parent – it's not good for you, or for your baby.

Sandra R. Wolkoff, CSW

Wonderfully Fantastic Family Books

Here are some special books that will be fun for the entire family!

Brothers of the Knight by Debbie Allen; pictures by Kadir Nelson; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1999; Hardcover $15.99. "Once upon a time in a little village called Harlem, that's in New York City, there lived a man, Reverend Knight." The Reverend had 12 sons and the story-telling dog named Happy. But there was a problem in the household. Every morning the brothers' shoes would be worn to threads and none of the nannies who came and went could stop it. Until one day Sunday, the new nanny, comes and changes everything. If the plot sounds familiar, this is a wonderfully updated retelling of the Twelve Dancing Princesses.

Max by Bob Graham; Candlewick Press; Canbridge, Massachusetts, 2000; Hardcover $15.99. Sweet, funny and charming story about a baby superhero who doesn't quite live up to expectations of superheroes. Happily his parents and grandparents (superheroes one and all) are just like all parents, changing diapers, playing out in front of the house, and allowing Max his own time to find his special super talents and become "a small hero doing quiet deeds."

The Seven Silly Eaters by Mary Ann Hoberman; illustrated by Marla Frazee; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, 2000; Softcover $6.00. At first Mrs. Peters didn't mind the food quirks of her children, but as the family grew and each had his or her own particular quirk it became harder for mom to feed the family. Mary Lou eats only soft and squishy homemade bread. Little Jack eats only apple sauce. And so on. Then, mom's birthday comes and the children all make their own special dishes. The problem is the mess. So, the kids throw the whole thing all together into the oven. The result is a food that everyone loves.

The Tickle Stories by Jean Van Leeuwen; pictures by Mary Whyte; Dial Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover $15.99. Grandpa is putting the kids to bed, but first there's the nighttime ritual of kisses, tickles and stories. Fantastic stories about living on the farm in summer, and tickling worms, and cows, and flying through the air.

We Eat Dinner in the Bathtub by Angela Shelf Medearis; illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers; Scholastic Inc.; New York, 1996; Softcover, $3.50. Although aimed at kindergarten children who can read the book with their parents, or for themselves, this charming funny book will appeal to all youngsters. Why does the family eat in the bathtub? Because they sleep in the dining room. And so it goes through all the rooms in the house.

PARENT & PRESCHOOLER
2001

Stumped for a Holiday Gift?

Start out 2001 on the right track - give a gift subscription to the *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*. We will send your recipient a gift acknowledgement. Just send the receipent's name and address, your name, address, and check payable to: North Shore Child & Family Guidance; P&pN; Gift Subscription Dept.; 480 Old Westbury Rd.; Roslyn Hgts, NY 11577-2215. Don't wait - this is a very special gift!

Dear Reader ...

Years ago, shortly after my son was born I realized that all the hot meals were now eaten cold. And the cold meals sat on the table until they warmed up to room temperature as baby needs took precedence over just about everything else. I couldn't tell you exactly when, but there came a time when I understood that life would never be the same as it was before that child was born – instead it would be richer and more complex, adding a dimension that we couldn't possibly have anticipated. Parenting lasts forever, and it changes every aspect of our lives.

We dedicate this month's issue to the surprises of becoming a parent. Read Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour's article on real parents' experiences (although we do change the names). You'll find many of them familiar. Sandy Wolkoff, CSW talks about some of the less happy surprises we may face as parents. Finally, for a major smile, read Jane's poem "I Used To Be Somewhat of a Star."

Then, check out Parents on Parenting, a selection of excerpts from books written by experts who are also mothers and fathers.

If you'd like to share your parenting experiences, write us and let us know what most amazed you about having a baby. We always love to hear from our readers.

Don't forget the craft and gift ideas for your youngster and our book reviews.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season, and a healthy and happy New Year.

Neala Schwartzberg

Advertising to Children Through Children's Books

Our Position

We have noticed a trend in some children's books to make the star of the book not an animal or a child, but a commercial product, with brands of candy, cereal, and more taking center stage. Sometimes these are counting books, based on the notion that children will enjoy counting familiar (and branded) foods more than fruits, balloons, or animals. This may or may not be true. We've never seen any research about this. What we do believe is that regardless of the context, writing a children's book around a product reinforces that brand name product and acts as a subtle (or perhaps not so subtle) form of advertising.

Commercial advertising is all around us. At *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* we feel we need to draw the line somewhere. And we've drawn it for children's books. Books based on branded commercial products such as fast food, candies, cereal, and others will not be reviewed in our Library Resources. We don't believe parents should have to pay to bring commercial advertisements into their home and into the hands of their children.

Neala Schwartzberg, Ph.D.
Editor

Parents Look At Parenting

Judging Our Mothering

We mothers are judged not only by our behavior, but also by our *children's* behavior, which we can influence but not control. Mothers are told that our children shouldn't be considered extensions of ourselves - that they are their own separate little persons and we shouldn't ever need them to *be* a certain way, or to *appear* a certain way, or to *achieve* a certain amount for *our* sake. On the other hand, we mothers are still judged by our children's behavior, as if they are mirrors reflecting back the good or bad job we have done.

• Excerpted from: *The Mother Dance: How Children Change Your Life* by Harriet Lerner, Ph.D. HarperCollins Publishers, 1998.

Making Room to Become a Father Squeezes a Parent's Role as Partner-Lover

There's an old saying in the Talmud that a man has three names: the one his parents gave him at birth, the one that others call him, and the one he calls himself. A person's identity, according to the rabbis, is a rather amorphous thing. What the rabbis don't talk about is that all three of those names are subject to change over time - especially the one you give yourself. The way you view yourself today may have nothing to do with how you'll see yourself tomorrow.

This point is nicely illustrated by what family researchers Phil and Carolyn Cowan call the "pie chart." Over a period of nearly two years, the Cowans asked a large number of men to draw a circle and divide it up into sections that reflect how important each aspect of their life actually felt - not simply the amount of time in the role.

Over the duration of the study, "Men who remained childless showed a significant increase in the 'partner-lover' aspect." "New fathers, however, were squeezing 'partner-lover' into a smaller space to accommodate the increase in the 'parent' piece of the pie."

• Excerpted from: *A Dad's Guide to the Toddler Years* by Armin A. Brott, Abbeville Press, New York 1998.

Hidden Hurdles at Home

You're bathing little Stevie, the two of you laughing like idiots as you nose-dive Rubber Ducky into the tub, splashing water in each other's faces and onto the floor. Suddenly behind you, the bathroom door opens. It is your wife. You find yourself smiling because you know how pleased she will be: here you are, not only spending time with your child but doing one of those drudge tasks that she used to accuse you of shirking. You turn to your wife expectantly.

"It doesn't look like he's getting very clean," she intones soberly, as she inspects behind Stevie's ears.

What, you may ask, is going on here?

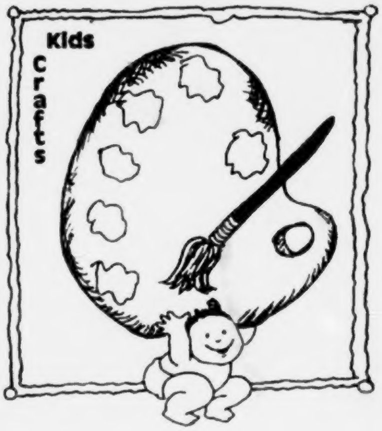
Our wives really do want us to contribute more at home now that they are working too. And they think it would be good for the kids if we had closer and steadier relationships with them. But just like us, our wives are burdened with myths and stereotypes, fears and guilts, that cause them to send us mixed messages that say, in effect, "Do your fair share, but remember, home is my turf!"

• Excerpted from: *Marathon Dad* by John Evans, Avon Books, New York, 1998.

Seeing Ourselves Through Our Children's Eyes

The ability to communicate with children, for it is an ability which both parents and children learn, can involve moments of poignancy. A father watching his son shout at a small kitten suddenly had a different perspective on how his own actions looked and felt to his child. A mother had a comparable insight. One evening after dinner, her four-year-old cut up some fruit to make a fruit salad. Proudly, she brought the salad to her mother, insisting that she eat some. The mother said no, that she was still full, but the child insisted. "I suddenly realized how my daughter feels when I make her eat," the mother said.

• Excerpted from: *The Six Stages of Parenthood* by Ellen Galinsky, Perseus Books, Reading MA, 1987.



Kids Crafts

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa the holidays are a perfect time to start a tradition of making crafts. Children love to give as well as receive so put aside time to begin crafting. After all there is no better gift than a one-of-a-kind, homemade creation.

These hands-on experiences are a tangible way for your children to showcase their unique imagination and take pride and delight in their artistry. Happy Holidays!

Holiday Wrapping Paper

You will need: large white paper (butcher paper works well); tempera paints in colors for the specific holiday; cookie cutters in holiday shapes.

Using her choice of cookie cutters your child decides the type of motif. Have her dip the cookie cutters into paint to make designs, stamping them onto paper and letting them dry thoroughly. Take time to talk about the value of giving.

Candy Christmas Tree

You will need: ice cream cones; white cake frosting; green food coloring; assorted colored candies, sprinkles, and baking decorations.

This project is entirely child directed. So, let your child use his imagination. Whatever it looks like, resist the urge to "fix" it.

Using a holiday paper plate as the base have him start by making a generous white circle of frosting in the middle of the plate for a base of snow. Place the cone upside down on top of icing, pressing to make it secure. Together mix the remaining white icing with the green food coloring until it's dark green. Then have your child ice the entire cone. Decorate the tree with the candy.

Winter Wonderland Table Centerpiece

You will need: recycled meat tray; floral foil (from florist) or any colored foil; non-hardening clay or florist clay; Twigs, pine cones, berries; red or green bow; fake snow; taper or votive candle.

Have your child cover the meat tray with the floral foil. Then have her place the clay in the center of the tray. Place the natural items in the clay, until completely covered. Lightly spray with the fake snow. Add the bow and taper candle in the middle.

Fragrant Holiday Ornament

Ingredients: 1 cup and 2 tablespoons flour; ¾ cup cinnamon; 1 cup salt; 1 cup water; 2 teaspoons ground clove. You will also need: rolling pin; holiday cookie cutters; puffy paints or tempera paint; glitter mixed with glue; holiday ribbon.

Have your child mix all the ingredients well. Then roll out to about ½ inch thickness. Cut designs out of the mixture using his choice of cookie cutters. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Using a straw, make a hole through the top for hanging. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 20-25 minutes depending on the size of ornaments.

As they bake the ornaments will give a delicious aroma, but ***they are not food and shouldn't be eaten***. Once the ornaments have cooled completely, they are ready to be embellished, using paints and glitter to decorate. When this is finished slide a ribbon through the hole.

My Mkeka Placemat

You will need: cardboard; red, green, and black construction paper or pictures of fruits and vegetables; scissors; clear contact paper, glue.

This Kwanzaa craft can be used to hold the traditional symbols of this holiday. To start, have your child cut long strips out of the construction paper. Talk about the use of the colors, which are symbols of African-American heritage. Then have your child glue the strips on the cardboard in a design of her choice. Let dry thoroughly then cover the entire piece with the clear contact paper. While working discuss with your child the Nguzo Saba (the seven guiding principals) of Kwanzaa and the significance of each. Once your child has completed the placemat arrange the Kwanzaa symbols.

Variation: *Instead of using the traditional colors of Kwanzaa have your child choose pictures of fruits and vegetables which would symbolize the Mazao (crops). This is an activity which can be built upon in several ways-to discuss Kwanzaa and the origins of the celebration.*

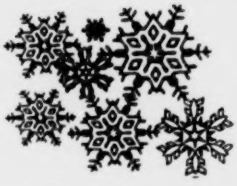
My Menorah

You will need: clay; Hanukkah candles (or birthday candles); toothpick; butter knife; tempera paints in dark blue and white

Begin by telling your child the Hanukkah story, and the miracle of the oil that was to have taken place. While discussing have your child take a hand-sized piece of clay and shape into a circle about one inch thick. Using a butter knife have her cut the circle in half, then ask her to join them back together, so you can see a line running across the piece. Now poke eight holes in the bottom half with a Hanukkah candle and one on the top for the "helper" candle: the Shamash. Help your child etch a Star of David on top. Allow to dry for a few days then have your child paint it with a dark blue. Outline the Star of David and decorate with designs using the white paint.

Dawn Marie Barhyte

Library Resources



Books of the Season

Kwanzaa

My First Kwanzaa Book by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate; illustrated by Cal Massey; Scholastic; New York, 1992; Softcover $5.99. Through simple text and colorful illustrations, each page highlights one day of the Kwanzaa celebration of African heritage.

Hanukkah and Christmas

Light the Lights by Margaret Moorman; Scholastic; New York, 1994; Softcover $5.99. One of the few books that focuses on families who celebrate both holidays. Emma's father takes charge of the Hanukkah celebration and her mother, the Christmas celebration, and Emma gets to experience the special holidays of both parents.

Christmas

Arthur's Perfect Christmas by Marc Brown; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 2000; Hardcover $15.95. Arthur knows exactly how he wants Christmas - lots of snow, a perfect tree and a delicious turkey dinner. Unfortunately, there is no snow, his father decides to make the kind of dinner that would have been eaten in Bethlehem at the time Jesus was born, and DW decorates her half of the tree with unicorns and trolls. Although things get even worse for Arthur, and for his friends trying to have their celebrations, it all ends happily.

Dream Snow by Eric Carle; Philomel Books; New York, 2000; hardcover with musical chime $21.99. An interactive book for little ones telling the story of the farmer who had five animals and a tree. The book has a bit of counting, a bit of clever page-turning (plastic sheets simulate the animals getting covered with snow), and a decorated Christmas tree with a push-button to activate a set of musical notes simulating chimes.

How Murray Saved Christmas by Mike Reiss; illustrated by David Catrow; Price Stern Sloan; New York, 2000; Hardcover $10.99. This is definitely not your conventional Santa story, and it may not even be for children, but it's funny and quirky by one of the writers for The Simpsons. Santa has been accidently rendered unconscious and the only person who can deliver the toys is Murray the K (Murray Kleiner), a very New York kind of deli owner. Written in verse with idiosyncratic illustrations, it will either make you laugh, or leave you scratching your head. But it is also a sweet book in which Murray decides to bring presents to all the children, not just the ones who have been good. "We have time. We have toys. Why can't we bring them to bad girls and boys? So a kid might be lazy, he might be a slob. He drives his folks crazy. That's sort of his job!"

The Little Drummer Boy by Ezra Jack Keats (words and music by Katherine Davis, Henry Onorati and Harry Simeone; Viking; New York 2000; Hardcover $15.99. Keats' special illustrations of the timeless Christmas carol about a drummer boy who brings Jesus his gift - the boy would play his best for Him. Words and music are provided at the end.

Spot's First Christmas by Eric Hill; G.P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 2000; Boardbook $7.99. Another Spot book for the little ones in a sturdy boardbook format with flaps to lift - the story of Spot's first Christmas.

Hanukkah

All About Hanukkah by Judyth Groner and Madeline Wikler; illustrated by Kinny Kreiswirth; Kar-Ben Copies, Inc.; Rockville, MD, 1999; Softcover $5.95. Consistent with the title, this book includes the story of Hanukkah, as well as information on traditions that accompany the holiday, songs, and blessings to be said over the Hanukkah candles. It also suggests topics for discussion and provides recipes for potato latkes and doughnuts.

Northern Lights: a Hanukkah story by Diana Cohen Conway; illustrated by Shelly O. Haas; Kar-Ben Copies, Inc. Rockville, Maryland, 1994; Softcover $5.95; Hardcover $14.95. Sara joins her father on his medical rounds of Alaskan communities when a sudden storm strands them in a Yupik village. Sara and her father spend Hanukkah with their pilot's family sharing both dinner, and the story of the holiday.

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CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute
Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award
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Volume 15, Number 11
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December 2000

¡Sorpresa! Es Ud. Padre

¡Súbitamente Ud. es padre! Es curioso que esta tarea se sienta tan posible e imposible al mismo tiempo. No importa cuanto nos hallamos preparado, la realidad de ser padre es muy distinta de lo que creíamos que iba a ser.

Decidimos conversar con algunos de nuestros amigos y colegas sobre sus experiencias de ser padres recientes, y les preguntamos qué les sorprendió sobre la experiencia de ser padres.

Emociones y Sentimientos Fuertes

Lo primero que descubrimos es que convertirse en padre suscita emociones y sentimientos muy fuertes.

"Yo estaba en la sala de parto y mi marido y el médico estaban conversando sobre política", recuerda Martina. "De repente el trabajo de el parto se puso más intenso y un poco después nació nuestra hija. Y en ese instante me di cuenta, Sentí que había sido parte de un milagro -es la única manera que puedo describirlo. Me embargo un asombro al ver esta nueva vida. Me puse a llorar y mi marido también. Había escuchado sobre el 'milagro del parto' pero fue sólo en ese momento que me di cuenta lo que significaba realmente esa frase".

Muchos padres nuevos se sorprenden al darse cuenta cuanto les gusta ser padres. "Cuando nació mi hija para mi lo más sorprendente fue que me encantó ser padre. Yo siempre había pensado 'bueno, seré un padre fantástico' y 'estoy listo para querer a mi hija'. Todos esos sentimientos se centraban en la niña, como debiese ser. Lo que no esperaba es que me enamoraría de ser padre," dice Carlos. "Me encantaba ayudarla a caminar y conversar, jugar y leer. Me fascinaba enseñarle los números y observarla explorar el mundo. Me maravillaba cuando ella me miraba con esos ojos grandes y decía ¿'qué es eso'? Yo era su héroe y -vaya- que emoción más grata es ser el héroe de alguien".

Otro aspecto sorprendente que los padres descubrieron es que realmente ponen las necesidades de sus hijos por sobre las suyas propias sin pensarlo dos veces. Magda, médico y madre por primera vez, describió algo que le sucedió justo después del segundo cumpleaños de su hija. Astrid estaba corriendo en el pasillo y vomitó. Cuando Magda comenzó a correr por el pasillo, se resbaló y se cayó. Después que se levantó, inmediatamente tomó a Astrid, la examinó para asegurarse que estaba bien, la limpió y la puso en

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su corral. En ese momento se dio cuenta de su propia condición. Su brazo tenia un chichón, su rodilla estaba levemente hinchada y de repente se sintió abrumada por el hecho que "realmente se había caído al vomito" y no se había dado cuenta. "En ese momento supe que quería decir cuando la gente dice que darían su vida para proteger a sus hijos. Yo siempre había pensado que eso era un lugar común. Ahora sabía que era cierto y yo nunca lo hubiese creído".

Sentimientos de Responsabilidad e Idoneidad

Muy frecuentemente nos sorprendemos de lo bueno que somos como padres y de cuan difícil es la tarea.

"Yo no podía creer que Dalia y yo pudiésemos funcionar e incluso ser buenos padres con tan poco sueño", nos dice Amir. "Cuando trajimos a nuestro hijo a la casa del hospital el trabajo nunca se acababa. Había que darle su biberón a mitad de noche, lavar pañales, y esterilizar todos los biberones, cucharas y platos. Nunca descansábamos. Y nuestro hijo lloraba mucho. Fue un tiempo difícil pero logramos superar todo y me hizo sentirme competente y confiado".

Silvana también descubrió cuanta responsabilidad se requiere para criar un hijo. "Uno está embarazada y uno sabe que, incluso mientras está en el útero, uno ya es responsable de ese niño, pero uno nunca se da cuenta de cuanto trabajo físico uno tendrá que hacer para criar su niño. Es impresionante cuando uno se da cuenta de la enormidad de la responsabilidad involucrada en criar un niño desde la infancia hasta que pueden manejarse solos. Yo sabía que un bebé sería mucho trabajo, pero nunca se me ocurrió que sería la tarea de mi vida".

Realidades e Imágenes que no Calzan

Frecuentemente, tener un bebé causa sorpresas infelices. A veces estas vienen de las imágenes que tiene la gente de la vida familiar -algunas que simplemente no reflejan la realidad.

Cosas de Hermanos

A pesar de cuanto cree la gente que están preparados para enfrentar problemas entre hermanos, la realidad siempre es distinta. "Lo teníamos todo planificado. Ibamos a tener dos niños, con una diferencia de tres años. Los íbamos a criar para que se quisieran y se protegieran mutuamente, y los cuatro íbamos a vivir felices para siempre", recuerda Michelle melancólicamente. "Que distinta fue nuestra fantasía de la realidad. Desde el día que trajimos a Margarita a la casa, José se convirtió en un rival". Michelle y su marido leyeron todos los libros y trataron de seguir todas las sugerencias pero José no cooperaba. "Empujaba a Margarita, gritaba cuando ella hablaba, siempre exigiendo nuestra atención, y generalmente haciendo nuestra vida un calvario. Para nosotros fue una completa sorpresa que la rivalidad entre hermanos fuese tan fuerte", dice Michelle.

Nunca Pensé que Esto Pudiera Pasar

Otro aspecto de esa violación de expectativas ocurre cuando el niño tiene desordenes cognitivos o físicos. Pudiésemos tener serios e inesperados desafíos que enfrentar - desafíos que quizás nunca consideramos.

Marcelo, hijo de Jennifer y Alejandro, nació con Síndrome de Down, un desorden de las cromosomas que generalmente causa retardo mental. "Al principio Alejandro y yo estábamos abrumados por este acontecimiento", dijo Jennifer. "Nos sentimos como que nunca podríamos sobreponernos". Esta situación creo grandes tensiones dentro de la familia y requirió mucho tiempo antes que los miembros de la familia se sintieran cómodos y aceptaran la situación. A pesar de que sentían derrotados y poco preparados, buscaron y encontraron servicios especiales para Marcelo. Marcelo siempre va a necesitar atención y servicios adicionales, pero su familia también reconoce sus cualidades especiales. "Marcelo es el niño más dulce y tierno del mundo. Lo cuidamos y los queremos mucho pero nosotros sinceramente no esperábamos enfrentar este tipo de demandas en nuestra vida", asevera Jennifer.

Cambios Cotidianos de Vida

¿Cuan Desordenada Puede Estar la Casa?
Otro aspecto inesperado de ser padre parece ser la cantidad de tedio físico que se necesita para criar un niño. A pesar de las horas que la gente se pasa semanalmente

haciendo la limpieza, lavando y cocinando antes de ser padres, después del nacimiento de un niño, la cantidad de trabajo aumenta dramáticamente. Y a medida que llega un segundo o tercer niño, el trabajo de cuidar a la familia puede aumentar a cantidades agobiantes.

"Nunca nos dimos cuenta de cuanto trabajo físico se necesita para cuidar un niño y un hogar", dice Maggie, una contadora joven. Ella y su marido estaban acostumbrados a mantener su departamento inmaculadamente limpio. Esto cambió abruptamente cuando nació Gina. "El trabajo parecía de nunca acabarse. Simplemente mantenerla limpia y alimentada requería tanto tiempo y energía. Después de un día de trabajo completo, ambos llegábamos a la casa para otras seis o siete horas de limpieza, cocina, lavandería y al mismo tiempo tener un poco de tiempo para poder simplemente jugar con Gina. Parecía que nunca podíamos descansar".

Estrés en el Matrimonio

Uno de los aspectos más inesperados y desagradables de ser padres es el estrés que produce en el matrimonio. Si dos personas deciden tener un hijo para "sanar" un matrimonio, rápidamente se darán cuenta que esto solo puede empeorar las cosas. Una pareja necesita poder usar toda la comprensión y bondad posible para ellos mismos si quieren hacer funcionar la tarea de ser padres.

"La única cosa que me hubiera gustado es que la gente me hubiese dicho antes del nacimiento de Andrés, es el impacto que iba a tener sobre mi matrimonio. Todos los libros que había leído antes del nacimiento hablaban sobre vínculos afectivos y la satisfacción que significa ser padres", dice Linda. "Nadie nunca habló cómo el estrés, la falta de sueño, angustia, y el trabajo cambiaría nuestro matrimonio. Fue verdaderamente difícil cuando los "expertos" estaban hablando sobre la felicidad ilimitada y nosotros estábamos experimentando tensión y gritos interminables".

¿Qué Puede ser Útil?
Por lo tanto, después de hablar con sus amigos y colegas, qué hemos aprendido? Hemos descubierto que todos nos podemos encontrar con sorpresas cuando nos convertimos en padres pero que también hay cosas que podemos hacer cuando la vida se pone difícil.

Prepárese para ser padre.

Prepárese de antemano con toda la información posible para ayudarlo a sentirse razonablemente confiado que Ud. podrá hacer frente a ser padre. Cuando Ud. se sienta confiado, y tiene la información para adoptar decisiones, podrá cambiar de rumbo sí se da cuenta que lo que está haciendo no está funcionando.

*Espere lo inesperado. Dése cuenta desde el principio que los niños cambiaran todo. Lo que Ud. esperaba que sucediera seguramente no sucederá, y lo que no esperaba seguramente pasará. Estar listo para sorpresas le permitirá poder hacer cambios rápidos. *Cuide su matrimonio. Siempre trate de dejar tiempo para su pareja. Hagan citas reales con su pareja para simplemente estar juntos. Puede ser para tomarse un vaso de limonada mientras cocinan la cena juntos o puede ser una caminata por el barrio. Tiempo juntos, para cuidarse mutuamente, será tiempo bien gastado. Los unirá y los ayudará a ser padres como equipo. *Nadie dijo que tenías que comer del piso. Lo qué fue nunca más será. Los platos no se lavarán cuando Ud. cree que debieran ser lavados. A veces la ropa será doblada a medianoche. No deje que los "horarios" domésticos interfieran con la oportunidad de pasar tiempo con sus hijos o pareja. Recuerde, las cosas importantes se harán y las cosas que no se hacen quizás no son tan importantes. *Cuando algo serio pasa, obtenga la ayuda que necesita. Cosas tales como una enfermedad inesperada son difíciles de prever y aun más difíciles de aceptar. Pudiese ser una enfermedad inesperada de su niño o puede ser una persistente sensación de tristeza y depresión de la madre.

Simplemente recuerde:
(1) que hay otras personas en el mundo que están encarando la misma cosa y
(2) que hay expertos que lo pueden ayudar.

*Compare notas con amigos y semejantes. Los amigos, familia, incluso grupos de padres recientes pueden ser muy útiles, dándole la sensación de que no está solo en esta tarea. No solo pueden darle información y apoyo, sino que se dará cuenta que sus experiencias no son tan insólitas como Ud. creía.

*Mire la vida y ser padre con un sentido de humor. Ser padre puede ser divertido, y puede ser frustrante, y, a aveces, las dos cosas al mismo tiempo. "Cuando Carlitos tenía dos años, estaba en todas las partes donde no debía estar", recuerda Catalina. Un día mientras estaban haciendo sus labores domesticas, escucharon y grito fuerte de la cocina. "Corrimos a la cocina y ahí estaba Carlito" completamente cubierto de harina. Había harina por todas partes. Casi nos morimos de risa. Carlitos entonces nos miró y nos dio una sonrisa beatifica y dijo 'Yo hago nieve'. Nicolas y yo miramos esta pila de materia blanca y nos pusimos a reír. No hubiésemos cambiado esa sonrisa por todas las casas limpias del mundo".

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